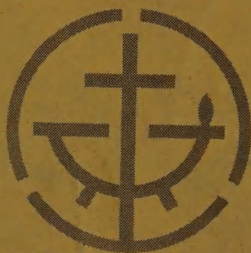


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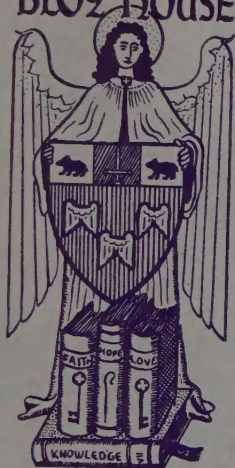


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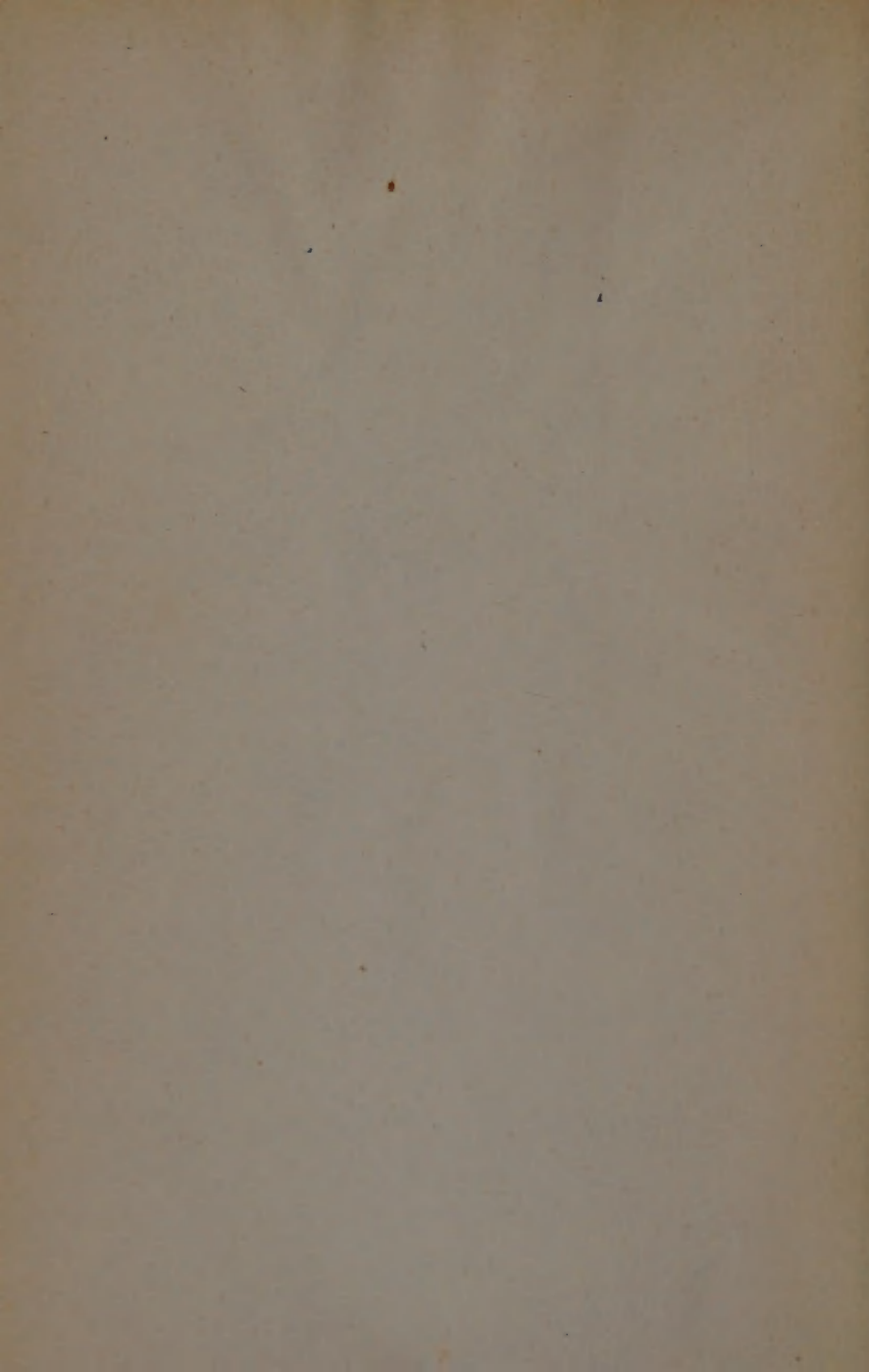
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# JESUS CHRIST

## The Proof of Christianity

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"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid  
which is Jesus Christ."

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BY  
*Franklin*  
JOHN F. SPALDING, S. T. D., 1828-1902  
*111*  
Bishop of Colorado.

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MILWAUKEE, WIS.:  
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.  
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## DEDICATORY NOTE.

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THE discourses following are in sermon or lecture form.

Though prepared at various times and for various occasions, they are all more or less connected, being all upon one theme. They were written for delivery, and are given as delivered. They have been preached, some of them many times, in different churches in the Diocese and elsewhere, and there has been a desire in regard to some of them that they be put in print and circulated.

The author feels that he is at least responsible in the measure of his ability for the religious instruction of the people of his own Diocese. It is this end that he now has chiefly in view. In the pursuit of this end he needs no apology. If this work, or any part of it, be helpful to any elsewhere, he will be the more thankful.

The writer believes that the general argument herein, that is, the historical argument, in its various forms, is best adapted to meet the scepticism that widely prevails. It is the argument from facts, and as facts are "stubborn things," is not easily controvertible. Men now want facts, not theories, of religion. Let us supply the felt need. The facts of Jesus Christ and His Ministry form one of the strongest of the proofs of Christianity. Was Jesus Christ prefigured, foretold? Did He come and live here, and teach and work and suffer and rise again? Does the Creed state the facts? Did the Church begin her career with her Ministry, Sacraments, Teaching, Polity, in the Apostolic Age? Is Christian History the record of facts? To



what extent has the Church been carrying on the work for which Christ came and which He "began to do and to teach" in Judæa, Samaria and Galilee? (Acts i, 1.)

The present writer goes on in some further discourses to set forth Jesus Christ working miracles, and thus exhibiting His character and proving His claims, teaching by miracles as well as by parables. He would include them in the present volume but for the fear of making it too large. Meantime he sends forth this book, which may be thought a very small contribution to apologetic literature, dedicating it, however, especially to his own clergy and intelligent laity, asking them to study it carefully and get what help they can from it, and praying that it may aid in strengthening their own faith so that they may the more effectually strengthen their brethren.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.  
Denver, 1891.

## CONTENTS.

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	<i>Page.</i>
I. JESUS CHRIST WITNESSED TO BY PROPHECY, -	11
II. JESUS CHRIST IN HIS RELATIONS TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, - - - - -	29
III. JESUS CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS, -	49
IV. JESUS CHRIST PROVING HIS DIVINITY BY HIS WISDOM, - - - - -	69
V. JESUS CHRIST THE GOD-MAN, - - - - -	89
VI. JESUS CHRIST THE HEIR OF THE WORLD, - -	101
VII. JESUS CHRIST MANIFESTING FORTH HIS GLORY, -	113
VIII. JESUS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, - -	129
IX. JESUS CHRIST THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY, -	145
X. JESUS CHRIST ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM, -	165
XI. JESUS CHRIST THE ENLIGHTENER SEPARATING MEN AND REVEALING CHARACTER, - - -	183
XII. JESUS CHRIST SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH TO HIS APOSTLES, - - - - -	201



I.

CHRIST WITNESSED TO BY THE PROPHETS.

ACTS i, 43 :

*To Him give all the prophets witness.*

## I.

### CHRIST WITNESSED TO BY THE PROPHETS.

THE spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It was the office of the Prophets to testify of Christ. They did this in various ways: some remotely and obscurely, and some more clearly and distinctly. But in a true sense, Christ and His Church were spoken of by all the Holy Prophets since the world began (Acts iii, 21). Not for themselves, but for their people and for us they bore this testimony. They perceived its meaning but dimly. A higher Spirit than their own presided over their utterances. It was the manifest design to nourish the hope of a brighter day ; to excite and keep alive the expectation of the coming of the Christ who should bring redemption from sin and evil, and to educate the Jewish nation for His reign in righteousness. Prophecy fulfilled, is evidence of the truth of Prophecy. The fulfilment, even though this was not the design, would be, to those who should come after, the proof of the Divine inspiration of the Prophets and the truth of their revelations. All history is doubtless the unfolding of a plan of God. In Sacred History the plan has prophetic interpretation. The

history is only understood in the light of its issues. The people it shows us, the course of their progress, their laws and government, the teaching they received, the faith they cherished, their customs, observances, religion, literature, all looked forward to results which should explain their meaning. From the Church of Christ and the Christian dispensation we may look back and see their import and end.

I take but a single line of comment upon this prophetic History. I take some of the utterances of the religious teachers who did so much to shape and determine the development of the people, to whom they spake as the oracles of God. The views to be presented do not depend on any theory of Prophecy ; whether it has a double sense, a nearer and a remoter reference, or a fulfilment in types which are themselves prophecies. What is plain and obvious to every reader of the Ancient Scriptures, whether learned or unlearned, is to be considered. There is found by all, to be a series of prophecies from the beginning in Eden to the close of the Old Testament Canon, and even later, to Christ's advent. These prophecies excite hope, and aspiration, in which the people live and act. And thus is explained their history, and the goal to which it ever pointed, the times of the Messiah and His Kingdom in the world.

The first prophecy in Eden is the germ of all Revelation, the foundation of the Church, the key of History.



The Scriptures are the record of the unfolding of that germ, of the issues of the development of that seed of Faith; of the varying fortunes of that long conflict in which the good should at last triumph over the evil, the Church over the world. The central fact in all history is the Incarnation. All before really looked towards it; all after, looks back to it as its explanation. All history before was to prepare for it. All history after is the appropriation of its results.

Picture to yourselves mankind existing in a single pair in that central region, whence the four great rivers of the world had their source. They are innocent of evil, with no knowledge but of the good, but without the experience of trial and suffering. They are free to choose. The tempter comes and they choose evil. The practical beginning of man's career in the world is as a sinner, with the dearly acquired knowledge of good and evil. He perpetuates a race of sinners, with sinful habits, ■ downward tendency, a growing degeneracy. Man's case had been hopeless, but for the intervention of Him who made him and placed him in the garden of innocence and beauty. The revelation of Redemption is coeval with the Fall. The great promise which gives hope to the world, stands at the beginning of History: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." The promise is explicit, but it is indefinite. The seed might be an individual, or it might be a race. The time is uncer-

tain. The mother of mankind might look upon her first born son as the instrument of its fulfilment. So she called him *Cain*, saying with reference to his name, I have *gotten* a man from the Lord. Her disappointment may be seen in the name of Abel, vanity, nothingness. But Seth perpetuates a seed of righteousness. Among his descendants it became the custom on recurring periods (of seven days?) to call upon the name of the Lord, doubtless in solemn worship. The institution of sacrifice dates from the time of Cain and Abel. The blood of beasts offered to God for atonement, confessed the deserts of sin and pleaded the ground of pardon. Taking the Scripture account as our guide, this is at least the most rational explanation. Hence it came to be understood as typifying the great propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

Ages pass and the whole world is filled with sin and violence. The hope for man is in the destruction of the wicked. Noah and his family are found righteous. In them the Church survives; the holy seed has its representatives. Noah finds favour with God, and a new revelation points him out as the giver of rest, the source of comfort, in the midst of a world which from the primal curse had developed a progeny that had brought the earth to the verge of ruin. The Ark is built. The flood comes in the rain from Heaven and the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep. The Ark rides in safety upon the swelling waters which engulf the wickedness of

man. By the baptism of water the eight souls are saved. Here is a new prophecy of deliverance. The Ark was a type of the Church of Christ. The mode of salvation in Him is divinely exhibited. Life is to come out of death, salvation out of destruction. The earth is to be peopled again from the saved. Sacrifice is renewed, and accepted. The Bow of promise arches the heavens, the sign of God's love and of the Covenant of Peace: token that the earth should be no more destroyed by water, and that sin will be passed over through God's forbearance until the fullness of time.

But Redemption is not yet. There is a new apostacy. The father of the faithful falls. Ham discovers his nakedness. A new prophecy reveals the fortunes, through the long ages of the future, of the offspring of the three by whom the whole earth is again overspread. It is a most wonderful prophecy. No reflecting man can read it and compare the fortunes of the three great families of the human race, without astonishment at the divine foresight which disclosed at its beginning the main features of their history. "Cursed be Canaan." That curse has not yet spent its full force upon Ham's depraved posterity. "God shall enlarge Japhet." Read herein the history of Europe. Witness her colonizations, her wonderful progress, her resistless enterprise. "Jehovah is the God of Shem." Jehovah shall come to dwell in his tents, and out of him shall come salvation. Is it not remarkable that

Shem has given to Japhet his religion? The religion of civilization and of humanity, destined to universal ascendancy, is from Shem and his spiritual seed.

After the lapse of several centuries the inherent sinful tendency has resulted in almost universal depravation. Heathenism has been established. Its characteristic is to deny the living, personal God, to reject the salvation which is of His appointment, and to seek it by means at man's own disposal, by his own power and wisdom. Its design and spirit was shown in the building of the Tower of Babel. Human presumption would scale Heaven, and combine all its forces in opposition to Him who dwelleth therein. Man's one language is confounded. The last bond of union is broken, to be restored only by the Spirit of the Christ. Heathenism is left to demonstrate its impotency, and negatively to prepare for the future salvation it had rejected.

Twice has been given the general promise, to be realized in the woman's seed and in Noah's posterity. In the first instance the descendants of Seth had preserved it; in the second, it was kept by Shem and his children until even these had almost lapsed into heathenism.

A new method is instituted. Abraham is called forth from among his idolatrous people into a new land, which God pledges to his seed, the type of a Heavenly country to be attained by the inheritors of his faith. In him the Church is reorganized. There begins a new development

towards the goal appointed in the prophecies of the woman's seed and of Shem's posterity. Under new conditions and with new means of grace and favour, a salvation is to be prepared in Abraham and his descendants, and prepared for all mankind.

The world in general had failed to preserve the true religion. But the fall of the sons of Noah and the confusion of Babel, had not been so absolute as to entail their necessary destruction. The Church is to be surrounded by the world. Side by side they are to work out their destinies. Heathenism might contain some seeds of good, which the Church would in time appropriate. Its learning, its philosophy, its literature would not be valueless. But it would be outside the pale of the true religion. Its mercies would not flow from the Covenant. It would run its course till "the fulness of time," when despair of gaining salvation and the knowledge of the Truth by its own efforts, should lead to the acceptance of the promised Gospel. In Heathenism, as well as in Judaism, there is a preparation for the Christ going on in parallel lines through the ages.

The divine method put in operation from the time of Abraham is very remarkable, and its features must be distinctly noted. The world was left much to itself. A single man, a single family, a single race:—these are the subjects of the divine leading, of immediate revelation and instruction in the knowledge and will of God. The

mode is one of particularization. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made" which were to be realized in them first and descend from them to the whole world. It is therefore said to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." But it is not all the posterity of Abraham. He had other sons besides Isaac, while to Isaac alone is the promise. From Isaac spring Jacob and Esau, but the promise is not to him who sells his birthright, who lives only for the present and its gratifications. It is for him by whom, however faulty his character, the far-off good is cherished.

The hopes of the whole world are bound up in the future of the children of Israel. These are God's people. Their history is divinely ordered. To them belong the prerogatives of the true succession from Adam and Seth, from Noah and Shem and Abraham. They have the true sanctuary, the knowledge of the true God, the divine worship, the acceptable sacrifice anticipative of a coming oblation, typical of the Blood of the Lamb of God. The Messiah is to be revealed among them in His various offices as they shall be able to apprehend the revelations. They are to be schooled and disciplined to interpret the promise in its gradual unfolding, and to appropriate it as the means of knowledge and of grace. Thus they are ever to look onwards. Their hopes are all anchored in the future.

Each of the twelve sons of Jacob receives the paternal

blessing, but of only one of these it is said, "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49, 10). Explain this as you will, it is Messianic. The Messiah is here a person. His reign is peaceful. Under His mild sceptre the Gentiles are to be gathered and united, after the Jews shall have lost their independence and sovereignty.

It was in Egypt that the families of the twelve patriarchs became a nation. For the long period of four hundred years they were evil entreated\* till at last they groaned under an oppression which was intolerable. Who would have taken this race of slaves, seemingly abject under the burdens of their cruel taskmasters, to be God's people, the depositories of His revelation, from whom is yet to come salvation to the world? But even this slavery is a necessary schooling. Moses arises, a Levite, educated at the Court by the king's daughter, and the heir presumptive to the throne of the Pharaohs, with all the learning of the Egyptians, to be the deliverer of his people, their guide, law-giver and legislator. By him God leads them up out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The destroying angel, at the sign of blood upon their door-posts, *passes over* their houses in his infliction of death upon the first-born of every household. This *Passover* becomes a prophecy. A feast keeps it in remembrance. The Paschal Lamb is foreshadowed; the deliverance from

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\* Acts vii, 6.



sin prefigured. The crossing of the Red Sea is another Baptism. Salvation comes by the destruction of their enemies, type of the great ultimate salvation from the overthrow of the enemies of the soul. The journeying of forty years through the wilderness is prophetic. The Manna symbolized the true bread which cometh down from heaven. The water from the "smitten rock that followed them" (I Cor. x, 4) which is Christ, gives the waters of eternal life. The decalogue reveals man's duty to God and to his neighbor, a law which is for all time and for all mankind, to be confirmed in Christ with the motive and grace given to obey and keep it. Wonderful indeed that such a law could be given some 1500 years before Christ, utterly impossible to be accounted for, as indeed are the provisions of the Jewish system and the prophecies generally, except on the hypothesis of the divine interposition.

The whole ceremonial law is full of evangelical meaning. The Epistle to the Hebrews is its undisputed interpretation. Christ and the Church of the Gospel may be read in all its features. It was a preparatory system, symbolical, typical, educational, instituted with the grand design to prepare the way for the Christ.

Single prophecies abound, but they must not be detached from the history, to which they give meaning and direction. How wonderful for its source and distinctness is that of Balaam, a heathen, a man grossly immoral,

who wished to curse Israel, but whose curses were all blessings. He sees in the far future the Kingdom of Israel, all powerful, raised to absolute supremacy, extending over the earth. The star of Jacob, the sceptre out of Israel, can only be realized in the King Messiah. So the prophecy of Jacob relating to Judah is developed, while the fate of surrounding nations is foretold. And thus a greatly endowed Prophet from Heathenism taught the wise men from the East to interpret the Star, and following its guidance to salute the manifested King and to honor Him with their gifts and homage.

Moses records this prophecy. It were strange had he given no other. Besides his prediction of the fate of the apostate Jews, which their condition from the time of their rejection of their own Messiah, has completely verified, and which is to-day a standing witness and demonstrative proof of the truth of the Gospel, he foretells the Christ under a new aspect. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me, Him shall ye hear" (Deut. xviii, 15).

Joshua succeeds to Moses. He was that Jesus who led the people into the earthly Canaan, to prefigure the work of the greater leader through Whom the heavenly should be obtained at last. After Joshua and the Judges comes the Kingdom, apparently a mistake. For the desire of it was from a worldly prompting, a forgetting that God was their King, and that their government was a pure

theocracy. But it was permitted for a purpose and over-ruled for good. It was made a means of further instruction in reference to the great end of the existence of the nation. The kingdom becomes the type of the Kingdom of Christ. It is revealed herein that the Prince of Peace is to rise from the lineage of David, to sit on his throne, to subdue the world to His dominion. The prophecy given in the last words of David is of his Great Successor, the Everlasting King, Jehovah, and the everlasting Covenant of peace in Him. With this the so-called Messianic Psalms are coincident, though they also speak of a suffering Messiah. The second declares Him to be God's Son, and that the heathen shall be His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession. In the eighth He appears as the Son of Man and Lord of all things. In the sixteenth He is the Holy One of God. In the twenty-second He is the sufferer for human sin. In the fortieth He is the Messenger of the Divine Benevolence. In the forty-fifth He is God triumphing and reigning forever. In the ninety-seventh He is adored by Angels. The one hundred and second declares Him to be the Creator, eternal, unchangeable; and the one hundred and tenth as the Lord, the King, Infinitely Holy, the Eternal Priest, the Ruler and Judge of men.

In the Book of Isaiah's prophecies, He appears as born of a virgin, as Immanuel, God with us, Whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the

Everlasting age, the Prince of Peace, Jehovah, the Saviour, the Shepherd, the beloved Servant of God, the Lamb led to the slaughter, the vicarious Sufferer, the propitiation for sin. Jeremiah reveals Him as the Lord our Righteousness ; Daniel as the Son of Man, one with God, exercising universal empire ; Micah as He whose actings have been from eternity ; Haggai as the Desire of all nations ; Zechariah as the Restorer, Saviour and Sovereign of the Church, the fellow of Jehovah, whose Blood should be the fountain of Sin—and to pass over innumerable similar passages in the Prophets of like nature and distinctness—in Malachi He is the angel of the Covenant, the Restorer and Purifier, coming to His Temple, with the new Elias for His herald. No matter what disputes there may be as to the age of particular prophetic books, or as to the immediate reference in particular passages, the great fact stands out in perfect clearness: Messiah is foretold in word and in events, in the teaching and in the history, the literature and the worship. He is God and Man. He is a Prophet, Priest and King. He is to suffer and He is to triumph. He is to give to the whole world salvation. Through Him the knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth. His Kingdom is everlasting.

Four hundred years more, and the Day would dawn. Prophetic symbols had marked the end of the old Dispensation. It was a time for profound study, for brooding in deep meditation over the law and the prophecies,

to learn the lessons of Providential teaching and warning, to watch and read the signs of the times. The Revelation given comes by some to be more clearly apprehended. The *Word* of God was revealing Himself. A few at least of the humble-minded would be prepared to receive and welcome His advent.

Behold now the fulness of time. The angels announce the glad tidings to the shepherds. The wise men of the East bring their gifts of adoration. Simeon and Anna realize the consolation for which they had long waited. Bethlehem receives its predestined pre-eminence. The convergent lines of History centre in their object. The Christ born of woman is the seed of Abraham, and the heir of David's throne and of the world. It is a new era. The end of human progress is to be henceforth the appropriation, by all the families of the earth, of the blessings which are theirs in Christ.

From this subject learn, first, that Christ is the true Messiah. Compare with the prophecies the circumstances of His birth, His lineage, His teaching and works, His Death, Resurrection and Ascension, His sending of His Spirit, His reign in His Church, its progress and beneficence. See how completely He fulfils them in all their larger meanings. Prophecy becomes the true proof of His Divinity and of the truth of His religion. Accept Him, then, in His true Character as your Prophet, Priest and King.

Learn, secondly, that the Prophets who bore from the beginning their witness to Christ, and who through long ages of darkness and error kept alive and active the hope and expectation of His coming, were inspired. The record of all the revelations through them, those marvellous interpositions involving miracle, all this supernatural history could not have been merely human. God spake by the Prophets and prompted the record of His own revelations. They are His word written for our learning. May it make us wise unto salvation.

Learn further to have confidence in God. The coming of Messiah was long delayed. Generation followed generation, century after century, still He came not. Why did He not come earlier? Why, for so long, must the anxious hopes of the pious be disappointed? But His earlier advent would have been premature. The people of God were not sufficiently disciplined. The world was not prepared. He came, as we now see, in precisely the fitting time, not too early nor too late. So, too, He will come again. He is coming now in His Kingdom. We are apt to think, in our short-sightedness, that the progress of the Church is slow, that the world can never be converted. But we may be sure that Christ will take care of His own work. Whatever prophecy foretold must be brought to pass. The entire race of humanity shall bow to His sceptre, and the blessing of His reign shall be universal.

Finally, my brethren, learn that He who was prom-

ised from the beginning and came into the world and fulfilled His work, came as the Saviour of each one of us. We were contemplated as being, through faith, of the seed of Christ. Let us make haste to realize our privileges. Let us so live that we may be found in Him, living members of His body the Church, which is the true Israel of God.

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NOTE.—On the subject herein treated, read especially Kurtz's "History of the Old Covenant," Fairbairn's "Typology of Scripture," and Dr. Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy."



## II.

CHRIST IN HIS RELATIONS TO THE HOLY  
SCRIPTURES.

REV. xix, 10 :

*The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.*

## II.

### CHRIST IN HIS RELATIONS TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE Holy Scriptures are much more largely prophetic than is generally supposed. Indeed, prophecy is their chief characteristic, and the whole "spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." "To Him give all the Prophets witness" (Acts x, 43). The Spirit "Who spake by the Prophets" is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. As the divine Logos is the author, so also He is the object of all prophetic inspiration.

The prophecy of the Scriptures is not to be interpreted by each one's private notions and fancies as to its meaning. Nor were the Prophets the interpreters of their own prophecies (2 Peter i, 20). For they spake as divinely inspired. "Prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i, 21). Of the salvation which is in Christ, "the Prophets enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed that not

unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; which things the angels desire to look into " (1 Peter i, 10-12). They did not understand fully, nor could they give the solution of their own prophecies. The solution was in history. When the events were fulfilled which were foreshadowed, it might be seen that the Word of God is almighty and that He who gave the Word caused the events to come to pass. There is a divine intervention not only in the prophecy but also in the overruling creative power that fulfils it.

The Scriptures are none the less prophetic because largely historical, lyrical and doctrinal. This is because of the great and glorious future in Christ and His Kingdom to which the people to whom they related, were predestined. The seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, the house of David, were of consequence, because of the Messiah who was to come. In Him alone is the explanation of their history, and of all that is written concerning them. What, then, is the relation of Jesus Christ, and of the evidences of Christianity, to the book we call the Bible? This depends upon the nature and purpose of Holy Scripture.

What is the Bible? It is a book, or rather a collection of books, the authors of which are scattered over a long period, from Moses to the last of the Apostles. It is the

most wonderful Book in existence. It all relates to one great subject, as if its author was one. This marvellous unity can only be accounted for on the theory of a divine superintendence and inspiration, and by the fact that it is composed of the sacred literature of a people divinely called to become a nation, divinely taught and guided, with a history tending through long ages to one great purpose, the manifestation of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, crucified, risen and glorified, the Church Catholic His Body, and salvation for the world. The sacred books of such a people must be one book ; and the new Dispensation of Christ with its sacred writings, the result of the long preparation, could only be the product, the flower and fruitage of the old.

There is much in this Book that should lead us to study it as divine. There is a wonderful seriousness about it, an utter absence of levity. It treats of the most stupendous themes ; God, the soul of man, sin, guilt, penalty, redemption, righteousness, holiness, immortality. There is no Book that so teaches us what God is and what man is. We see in the Bible as in a mirror ourselves, all that is good and all that is bad within us. Nowhere else is there found such marvellous insight and such a clear manifestation of all that there is in human nature. A God is revealed who is One, infinite, eternal, of omnipotent power, of omnipresent wisdom, of perfect love, goodness and holiness. Thus saith the Lord, is the formula,

throughout, by which He commands the reverence and service of men.

In the Old Testament, a new and better Covenant is professedly grounded. Every one who searches can see that these Scriptures testify of Christ and of His salvation. It is not too much to claim that the seeds of all history are here contained, that the developments of Providence are the unfolding of these divinely implanted germs.

Nothing could be more absurd, than to hold the Bible responsible for teaching the facts and mysteries of physical nature, which we now call "science." We could not expect to find exact scientific statements made by men who, however inspired, were ignorant of science, and for men of their own and subsequent ages as ignorant scientifically as themselves. Nor need we wonder that acts are recorded without disapproval which could not be sanctioned by Christian morality. The education of the world, which was the purpose of the Scriptures, implies a progress. This progress must be found in the teachers as well as in the taught. To the men of whatever age, the instruction given must be adapted to the degree of moral and intellectual development they have attained, and to the circumstances of their condition. This could not be otherwise, without making the instruction nugatory.

Whatever may be said in criticism of the Scriptures, whatever imperfections men may think they discover in

them, it will be found that facts like the following are everlastingly true, and are impossible of explanation except on the ground of a divine interposition in the world. Ponder these facts deeply, my brethren, weigh well their import, take in their full significance, and you can never be shaken from your steadfast faith in the Word of God.

It appears from the Scriptures, first, that God had a people, a Church, from the beginning, chosen out of the general mass of mankind. To them He revealed Himself. He made them the depositories of heavenly wisdom. He directed them in a course of righteousness. The family and descendants of Seth, the family of Noah, Shem and his descendants, Abraham and those who came out of his loins, preserved through the ages a true succession of righteous men. Here was light, here was truth, here was virtue, here was a pure worship, whatever may have been the lapses and the failures, while the whole world besides was groping in the darkness of error, sunken or sinking in abominable idolatries and loathsome vices. So it was for some thousands of years.

Secondly, that God sensibly interposed on behalf of this people and led them through a history we may well call miraculous. Revelation implies miracle. It must be to persons. It was to the Church. It is seen in a history. If the history is true the revelation is proved. The men so acting, so teaching, so believing, so guided, so preserving

and witnessing to the truth, so assimilating it, so applying and developing it : these are the Revelation. The Revelation was always before the books. It had been just as true, though the books had not been written. The very fact of the Church of God in the world, living on from age to age, is a standing revelation. All along the Church, the primary revelation, is before the books that record it. There was need of the books, but they were made up of the teaching and history that preceded them. The facts would have passed from memory or been lost in obscure tradition and fable, and the teaching would have been corrupted and falsified. Institutions alone could not have preserved purity and uncorruptness. Hence the records. Inspired men were raised up in the Church from time to time as needed, and guided as to what to write and guarded from essential error. Such is the nature of God's written revelation to man. If it were so regarded, if this view were adequately realized, there would be far less room for rationalistic cavilling and objection.

Thirdly, consider the truths God's people possessed and the character of people thence resulting. The decalogue was given some 1500 years before Christ. How was it that this people had the Ten Commandments long before Greece was a nation, and while the Great Roman Republic was a thousand years in the future? Here was revealed a pure Monotheism, while for many centuries the



whole world besides worshipped their gods many and lords many, with sensual rites and debasing forms of devotion. So we might remark upon each of these laws, and draw contrasts equally suggestive. Mark this fact: Christianity in all these 1800 years has not improved upon the decalogue and the spiritual interpretation our Lord gave it. It is read to-day in tens of thousands of Churches among the most civilized and enlightened, and the prayer is daily offered that these laws may be written in our hearts and that we may have the grace to keep them. How was it, on any natural principles, that this people, so proverbially stiff-necked, ever prone to wander from the truth, and not by any means intellectually superior to others, yet had such marvellous moral and spiritual insight? There is but one answer that justifies itself to human reason. He gave the law who spoke to Moses in the bush, the "I am that I am."

Again, let it be distinctly marked, that in all their moral and religious ideas and practices, this people were many centuries in advance of all others. It is even demonstrable that out of Judea, and out of the germs of the Hebrew religion, developed into Christianity, have sprung the moral and spiritual forces that have displaced the idolatries and the impure morality of Paganism, and have moulded the high-toned virtues of Christendom. Let the comparison be carried out into all that relates to the idea of God, the knowledge of His attributes, His moral government, His

providence, His ruling in the affairs of men, the obligation of obedience, the nature of worship, righteousness of conduct, purity, holiness of life, the conception of sin, of guilt, and of moral pollution, and this transcendent superiority will be seen.

Let it also be distinctly noted that here, in those who received the revelations, was a deference as to a divine authority. Here was unquestioned certainty. God had spoken. His voice was heard, believed and obeyed. No doubt intruded. There was no hesitancy or vacillation of belief. While all around was a fatal lack of knowledge, irrational religions, monstrous superstitions, productive of every confusion and uncertainty in the thoughtful, and resulting at last in general scepticism.

Mark also in this connection, that among this peculiar people there was from the first and ever a dependence upon God, upon His light, His leading, His inspiration for the knowledge of truth and duty, and the disposition to pursue it. Faith, humility, prayer, obedience, patience, resignation: these were cardinal principles. These were the ground of a righteous and holy life. Among all others, self-will was the guide of action. Pride was one of the chief of virtues. The feeble light within the source of illumination. The natural dispositions, affections, appetites, desires, passions, the accepted suggesters of action, developing into religions with elements of good in them because man is never wholly evil, but religions still of human depravity and licentiousness of life.

And finally note the fact, already alluded to, of the prophetic element of the Scriptures. The people were chosen that they might be prophetic of the coming Messiah. Their history, their religion, their rites of worship, their literature, all had in view this end; they all testified of the Christ, and were intended, and hence adapted, to prepare His way. The long series of prophecies from the beginning in Eden, of symbol, type, and distinct prediction, ever growing clearer and more explicit, were fulfilled in the Incarnation, and the life and death of the Son of God, the Christian Church and its expansion, to culminate at last in the millennial glories in which earth shall be like heaven, that future day of peace and blessedness which the Church has taught even the world to expect.

It would lead too far to dwell on the strength of this evidence, nor is it necessary. Unsanctified reason may resist it. But there it stands. The Scriptures did testify of Christ. Christ came and fulfilled their testimony.

Christ and the Church are the final revelation. Christ reveals the Godhead. We may see in Him the Father. The Gospels and the other Apostolic writings are His record. He IS. Therefore they are true. The New Testament might not have been, still Christ would be the same to us. Christianity would be true, and the Church would live as His Body and the "witness and keeper" and "the pillar and ground of His truth."

We ask again, what is the Bible? It is not itself the revelation. It is rather the record of revelations made, as we must believe, under divine inspiration and guidance in "sundry times and in divers manners," progressively, as they could be received; made not originally in a book, but through living men who spoke to living men upon the most vital themes of human concernment. It is the recorded history of the people of God, of His dealings with them, of His manifestations to them in visions and theophanies\*, of prophecies made to them and revelations given, and miracles in their behalf, of the doctrines preached to them, of the hymns they sang, the rites by which they worshipped, the laws by which they were governed, their struggles and their aspirations, their good and evil, their prosperity and their adversity. It is the inspired record, and implies throughout much that was before and beyond it. Because it is the record, it is rightly called the Word of God. The great facts underlie it, of the people called in Abraham, delivered from Egypt, journeying in the wilderness, settled in Palestine, ruled by judges and then by kings, divided, afflicted, disciplined, carried into captivity and re-established, taught by prophecy, and by types, and by ritual services and sacrifices, and by the tabernacle and the temple, to expect the Christ; and continued in the New Testament, the

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\* On the Theophanies, see Scott's "Christian Life," Part II, Chapter VII, and Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy."

record of what Christ did, and taught and suffered, of the coming of the Spirit, of the establishment of the Church, of the preaching of the Apostles : such is the Bible. It is not itself primary. It is secondary ; it is a divine record, but it is a record of something greater than itself. The revelation does not depend upon but rather gives origin to the record of it. The record might never have been made, or have been lost, had God so willed it, and still the revelation would have been as true and real, and the Church to which it was made have been called, instructed, trained and sanctified in the same manner as had been determined. The Divine Founder of the Church might, had it pleased Him to do so, have still provided that the Creed, which in its articles is of course older than the New Testament, should be taught and the Gospel preached to all nations and Christians everywhere, and in all the ages nurtured by the Word and Sacraments.

It was, as is known to all scholars, at least some twenty or thirty years after the death and resurrection of Christ, before the earliest of the Gospels were written. It was some sixty or seventy years before the last of the books completed the Sacred Canon. It was some three hundred years before the mind of the whole Church had fully settled the question as to a few of the books that had been disputed. The Church converted the Roman world without the New Testament, all collected into a volume. It was an estimable privilege to any Christian or indeed

to any local Church to have a few of the books, any one or all of the four Gospels, and one or more of the Epistles, and to be able to confirm the faith thereby. We can never be sufficiently grateful that we have all the Holy Scriptures and are able to study them as well as to hear them read as a part of worship, as a chief help to the knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation. Yet even now we do not get our faith in the first instance from the Bible. Children learn it from their mothers. It is taught by word of mouth of sponsors and pastors. It is learned in the Creed and Catechism. The Bible confirms and deepens this teaching. But in many ages, when the Church put forth her mightiest energies for the conversion of men, there were few Bibles and few who could read and understand them. And yet as large a proportion of Christians as now knew Whom they believed, and understood and felt as much the power of Christianity over their hearts and lives as we do to-day.

It is a great error to hold up the Bible as a book to be worshipped. The letter can not save. It is only in the hands of living teachers that the Bible can preach effectually the word of truth. The Bible cannot administer the Sacraments and Ordinances of Christianity, nor establish worship, nor do many other things which Christ ordained should be done for the conversion and sanctification of men. It is as pertinent to ask now as in St. Paul's day, "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall

they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x, 14, 15). Bibliolatry is no more tolerable than mariolatry. As has been justly said: "A woman is more than a book." All forms of idolatry are to be condemned.

But it is asked, is not the Bible infallible? It is not quite correct to speak of the infallibility of a book.\* Infallibility or fallibility pertains only to persons. The men of the Church, Prophets, Evangelists, Apostles, who wrote the Bible were not infallible. St. Peter was no more infallible than is the Bishop of Rome. No man ever lived except the man Christ Jesus, who was not liable to err. The Holy Spirit who inspired the writers is of course infallible. Hence all Holy Scripture is profitable. All recorded in Scripture, that is of revelation from God and of doctrinal teaching, is authoritative. The prophetic element from the beginning to the end of the Scriptures is in the highest degree inspired. There was doubtless a Divine Providence and superintendency even in the record of facts of history and compilations from more ancient records, and genealogical tables. What is omitted shows this as well as what is written. There is an "inspiration of selection," as Canon Liddon in his last public sermon reminded us. Even statements that are incidental and unimportant have their value. But the argument for the Christian revelation does not depend upon the absolute correctness of everything recorded. Christians make

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\* Bishop Moberly's "Bampton Lectures," pp. 75, 76 and note N.

a fatal mistake who stake the defense of Christianity upon the accuracy of every word and date in the Scriptures. As ■ Christian it makes no difference to me whether the six creative days in Genesis were days of twenty-four hours or of long periods, or whether the acts of the days and their order can be made to tally with modern science; whether there were men before Adam, or whether the race is from a single centre, as is most probable; whether the duration of the lives of the antediluvian Patriarchs was as seems to be recorded, or whether the age they attained was the duration of the families or tribes to which their names were attributed; whether the flood was universal or partial; whether Usher's chronology, or that of the Septuagint, or Josephus, or the Samaritan Pentateuch, or any other, must be followed as to times and dates. It does not in any manner affect my Christian faith if there should be found errors or contradictions in Scripture chronology; if the story of Balaam's ass speaking with man's voice be, as the orthodox Dr. Irons held\* and as there seems good reason to believe, a vision; if the sun's standing still at the command of Joshua be not scientifically true, as quoted from the highly poetical book of Jasher; if there be interpolations by later writers and a re-editing of earlier books, or even if there be conflicting statements difficult or even impossible to reconcile. The Bible will not lose any of its real value if there be found in it such

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\* See his "Miracles and Prophecy," pp. 39-45.



errors and difficulties about matters immaterial or only subordinate and auxiliary to its real purpose. We need not admit errors till proved. That confident assertion is not proof, is ever to be remembered. But it would be very strange if books that have come down to us from such early times, that have been so often transcribed by hand and so often translated, should have suffered no injury through the hands of those who have preserved them. Inspiration of the books does not imply inspiration of the thousands of transcribers and translators. While the increasing knowledge of the antiquities and archæology of the East is every day adding confirmation to their accuracy, while there can be no doubt to us that the Bible is all true in an infinitely higher sense than any other ancient books when looked at and studied from the right point of view, which is spiritual, and in its relations to Christ and Redemption in Him, yet let us frankly say that if new interpretations, which are often found to be old, are necessary, we will accept them ; if errors be detected, we will admit them, nor prize the Scriptures any the less, by putting them in their right place, as the Scriptures of the Church, and using them as she intended, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The Creed will be forever the same. The Christian faith cannot be changed. The Church will still and forever embody the whole Gospel, and will present her witness for all doctrine and duty. The spirit of

her prophecy will be as from the beginning the testimony of Jesus.

How did Christ found His religion? Not by commanding a book to be written, but by the sacrifice of His life and His resurrection, by choosing His Apostles, commissioning them to baptize all nations into the faith of the Creed, and to teach all things whatsoever He had commanded, by instituting the memorial Sacrament of His Body and Blood, by ascending to the right hand of power and sending forth His Spirit to be His Church's life, and to make effectual all the means of grace and salvation. The Church converted the world by the living agency of her ministers and her faithful people. The Scripture in their hands is most invaluable. In its right place and use we cannot well exaggerate its importance. It was ordered in infinite wisdom that oral tradition should not be always depended on, that the words and testimony of Jesus and the Apostolic preaching should be written down for the instruction and edifying of Christians in all ages, as the clearest, purest reflection of what Jesus was and what He did, and taught, and suffered, and what His first Apostles did and taught in His name. The Word of God in the hands of a faithful ministry is the sword of the Spirit, and is a mighty instrumentality of the Church. But outside of the Church, apart from its legitimate use by Christians, it is unavailing to teach infallibly and to convert and save mankind.

Therefore I would not expect to convert an unbeliever by putting a Bible into his hands. It is impossible to tell what he would make of it, what absurdities he might, with an honest perversity of mind, profess to find in it. To those outside the Kingdom, the Church is the proof of Christ and Christianity. The prophetic spirit in the Church must ever give the testimony of Jesus and the witness to His claims. The Church, with her Creeds, her worship, her continuity in history, her ministry of Apostolic succession, her living members representing Christ her Head, doing His work, her Word and Sacraments and perpetual life in manifestation ; such are her credentials. These are confirmed by the prophecies which went before and prepared for Christ's coming, and the miracles, by which He proved His character and illustrated the nature and purpose of His mission. For the facts of the history, prophecy and miracles, the sacred writings would be the sufficient record, even though not inspired, and though they were read and estimated like any other equally authentic writings. But to us Christians the Bible is the Book of books. It everywhere testifies of Christ. In all its parts it gives confirmation of the faith. It affords the basis of all teaching : " Whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation " (Art. vi). Its constant study is a means of grace. If taken in the

sense of the Church, of which the Prayer Book is the best expression, to the devout hearer or student it is, by the Spirit's application, the Word of truth that sanctifies. For it is full of the Spirit of Prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus the Christ.

### III.

CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

EPH. i, 10 :

*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times,  
He might gather together in one all things in Christ.*

### III.

#### CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS.

“THE fulness of time,” “the dispensation of the fulness of times,” are St. Paul’s phrases, to characterize the time of the Redeemer’s coming. His use of language is here, as always, extremely felicitous. It shows the profoundest knowledge of the meaning of history. The Apostle said, that man as such, that the whole world has a progress, which is a growth or development, guided by law, and tending towards a predestined goal. The gathering together of all men in Christ was the great end to be ultimately realized. But this could only be when a certain stage of advancement should be reached, when mankind should be ready for the new dispensation, when the divine tuition of the chosen people and the providential leading of the Gentile nations, should bring in a day which might be called the fulness of time; when the conditions should become favorable to the recognition of the coming Christ, to the setting up of His Kingdom, to the putting in operation the instrumentalities for the gradual appropriation of the results of His Incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and that incorpora-

tion of men into His Body which should end in the exhibition of a united, redeemed and divine humanity.\*

There is a fulness of times in respect to the people of Israel. The law of their progress was revealed. The agencies that furthered it were natural and supernatural. A series of special divine interpositions guided the currents of their history. They had reached the period of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the old dispensation of law and prophecy had done all it could for them, and when their relations to other nations had become favorable to the establishment of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ.

There is also a fulness of time in respect to the Gentiles. It was found in concurrence with that of the Jews. It was the result of a preparation which had been going on through all their history. It was the time when Judaism and Heathenism stood to each other in peculiar relations, and when it only wanted the Redeemer's coming in His Kingdom to bring them into unity, and thus unfold the mystery which had been hidden from all previous gene-

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\*The Christian admits and indeed contends for the doctrine of development or evolution, as applied to History, and to Physics and Biology as well. But it is the development of God-given germs, according to divinely predetermined types and towards the divinely foreseen end. *Final causes determine it.* And at the required stages of the progress or unfolding of God's plan and purpose, He Himself manifestly appears, never allowing Himself to be put aside or ignored by the human mind without its own confusion and self-stultification. The trouble about Mr. Toy, of Harvard, and all like investigators—German, English or American—is that they ignore this great truth. Toy's "Judaism and Christianity."



rations, of the breaking down the middle wall of partition that had separated them and the gathering together of both Jews and Gentiles in the One Catholic Body of Christ, with powers of universal expansion.

It is the fulness of time in the latter aspect with which we are least acquainted. It is a fitting Advent subject, to consider the preparation among the Gentiles for the new dispensation of the Gospel. It will help us to arrive at juster views of Ancient History. It will give us more adequate conceptions of the place and the importance of the great fact of the Incarnation, which has from the beginning, and will to the end of time and in Eternity, determine the destinies of man. It will add confirmation to that more sure word of prophecy which proves the truth of Christianity (2 Pet. i, 19).

The region chosen of God to be the dwelling-place of the Israelites was doubtless of providential design. When Abraham, called out of Ur of the Chaldees, first set his eyes upon it, or when he bought in it a piece of land for ■ burying place (thus securing a right of possession to be enjoyed centuries after by his descendants), he could have known little of its peculiar adaptations for the purposes God had in view. This small district in the southern part of Syria was to be for many centuries isolated, and yet intimately related by position with all the greatest nations of antiquity. It was contiguous or near to five great seas. It was, as it were, a bridge connecting the Nile

with the Euphrates. It was near and yet outside of the great lines of travel and commerce between the East and West. The Monotheism of its people could be kept uncontaminate, their peculiar polity and institutions safe from encroachments, while their development under divine training was in progress. The great world Empires surrounded this favored land: Egypt, Chaldæa, Phenicia, Assyria, Babylonia, Medea, Persia, and yet it never united its influence in their mighty civilizations. It was separate from them all as in succession they rose to greatness, reached the culmination of their glory and passed away. And when the time should come for the world religion to go forth out of Judea, its central position and relations would favor and render easy the rapid propagation of the Gospel into all the countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. It was indeed, as said in Ezekiel (xxxviii, 12, Vulgate), the *umbilicus terræ*, the navel of the world.\*

“The learning of the Egyptians,” in which Moses was skilled, was doubtless important in its results upon the Hebrews, but it gave little aid in laying the foundations of that system of law, polity and worship which afford manifest proof of his “divine legation.” The Canaanites, conquered by Joshua and finally subdued by David, while they helped to the knowledge of some of the Arts, gave constant temptation to the idolatry of a debased form of Paganism. In the period of the decline of the

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\* Ritter's “Geography of Palestine.”

magnificent kingdom of Solomon, great armies, Assyrian, Egyptian, Hittite, Babylonian, swept over this land in their wars of conquest, involving as incidents the paying of tribute and the captivity of Israel, and afterwards of Judah ; but they did not essentially affect the peculiar religious autonomy of the Jews, and were aiding in the evolution of the plan of God in their dispersion and necessary discipline.

Through modern exploration, Egypt is proving the substantial accuracy of the Pentateuch, and Phenicia, Assyria, and Babylonia are verifying that of the Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah.

After the Assyrian and Babylonian, there were three great Empires which assumed successively the leading place in the world's history, and whose influence was all-important. They were the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman. The Persian empire was founded or consolidated by Cyrus, a man marked out in prophecy to show special favor to the Jews in permitting them to return to their own land and to rebuild the walls of their capital. It rapidly extended itself and absorbed the surrounding nations, and comprised Persia, Assyria, Babylonia, Medea, Phenicia, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, and at least a part of India. It even extended itself into Europe, possessed Thrace and other extensive and important regions beyond the Danube, conquered Byzantium and demanded the submission of Macedon ; and with almost

incredible land and naval forces, invaded Greece, but only to be driven back with dishonor and be the means of consolidating that growing power. Then just as the great Assyrian and Babylonian empires, having served their ends, and being of no further use to civilization, had declined into the weakness of luxury and effeminacy, and had given place to the Persian, so after more than two hundred years of power, dominion and glory, Persia in like manner sinks into decadence. The special ends of Providence had been answered in her history, and she deserves defeat and absorption. The time of the Greeks had now come. Philip of Macedon consolidates the Grecian states under his powerful government, and Alexander, his son, with a comparatively small but invincible army, crosses the Hellespont and in a series of brilliant victories, to which history scarcely affords a parallel, becomes master of Egypt and the whole of Asia even to the Indies. He has conquered the world, and weeps that there are no more worlds to conquer.

Never did there hang such tremendous issues upon a battle as upon that of Issus, in which Darius is conquered and made captive. It is the victory of Greek civilization over the Persian and oriental. Grecian ideas, philosophy, culture, become dominant in the intellectual circles throughout the world. Greek becomes the universal language of literature and learning. The world has gone forward by vast strides in its career of advancement.

Whatever there was in the East worthy of perpetuation continues. But it is modified and exalted, and enters into higher forms as the result of the contact of Grecian thought.

The empire of Alexander falls in pieces at his death. But the mighty fragments are all Grecian. They are under Greek rulers. They are essentially Greek states. His far-reaching statesmanship had builded better than he knew. We need not trace their fortunes. They only now concern us, in so far as they helped to bring in the fulness of time and to prepare for the dispensation of the Gospel.

Go forward now for the space of three centuries. A power in the West has been growing from small beginnings through many generations. The world at large had been ignorant of its existence, while it was "mewing its mighty youth," gathering up its forces, strengthened and disciplined by war and conflict. It is now the age of Augustus. The Roman Republic has become an empire, and rules with stern justice and unbending rigor throughout the world, which is now at length everywhere at peace. It is an empire compared to which the Persian was small and the Assyrian insignificant. It surpasses by far in extent and importance that of Alexander. From Britain to the Indus, from Western and Northern Africa to Scythia and the Caspian Sea, the imperial power bears sway. It is in this reign of Augustus Cæsar, in the

Roman province of Judea, in the little town of Bethlehem, amidst circumstances of the greatest poverty, that the Saviour and Heir of the world is born.

We are now to consider how, in the political and religious condition of the world, the dispensation of the fulness of time is realized.

Regarding the world in its civil aspects, we find it to be now everywhere homogeneous. Nationalities almost innumerable are merged in the one nationality of Rome. She was born to rule. Her genius was for government. She went forth everywhere in the majesty of law and exacted unquestioning obedience. The Roman citizen was a citizen everywhere, and as such to claim was to receive protection. More than once St. Paul asserted his Roman citizenship and found it a source of personal security. No longer were the various States isolated and hostile. Travel and intercourse were facilitated by a common government, and especially by the public military roads which extended from Rome in every direction and connected the important towns in all the provinces; on which Roman cohorts marched at the command of the imperial will, to quell insurrection in remote districts and to preserve the imperial authority; and over which swift couriers carried the imperial mandates and returned with quick intelligence. It was as great an improvement in the means of transit as is the introduction of our modern system of steam locomotion. Now, for the first

time, are the political and physical obstacles removed to the carrying out of such a command as that given by Christ to His Apostles: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Greece had given to the world her language. Even the ignorant Jews, from among whom our Lord chose his first Apostles, could probably speak Greek. It was almost a sacred language to the Jews of the dispersion. The Hellenists everywhere read in it their Scriptures, and St. Paul quotes the Greek of the Septuagint oftener than the Hebrew. The Greek translation had been made at Alexandria in the third century before Christ, and was now known everywhere, and held apparently as of divine authority. The Gospel could everywhere be preached in Greek, and the Holy Scriptures appealed to for its truth wherever its living teachers could carry it forth into every part of the world. It is now evident why the captivity and the wide dispersion of the Israelites and the Jews had been permitted. Thus there was a meaning in all these mighty changes. They were not accidental and without design. There now reappears, and we are able to trace throughout, the golden thread of the Almighty purpose and the end towards which all was tending. It indeed needed an interpreter. "God is His own interpreter and He has made it plain."

We come next to consider the state of philosophical and religious opinion, in which the preparation for the

dispensation of the fulness of times is equally manifest, and possibly of even more essential importance.

When Persia stood at the zenith of her power, Daniel, under Darius, was made chief of the three presidents that ruled over the one hundred and twenty satrapies of the empire. The age of Zoroaster was not much earlier. Under his teaching a religion had been developed which was far in advance of anything that had been known in Heathenism, and which had peculiar affiliations with that of the Hebrews. The immutable distinctions of good and evil were clearly apprehended. These hostile powers were symbolized by light and darkness. The immortality of the soul was an article of Faith. The Magians, or wise men, like those who were guided by a star to the infant King in Bethlehem, are believed to have held, at least at the first, the doctrine of the divine unity. (Haug's *Religion of the Parsees*, p. 149.) As among the Jews the deity was symbolized by the Shekinah, the luminous appearance between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, so the Persian symbol of deity was the "pure, immaterial fire." In their doctrine of angels also, as in other beliefs, there was a seeming coincidence with the revealed religion which is quite remarkable. During the Babylonian captivity, no doubt the two religions came into mutual contact. The favor shown by the Persians to the Jews was probably from religious sympathy. It was only in accordance with the laws of Providence if,



by the example of the learned Persians, the people of God attained a clearer conception and a maturer development of their own religious ideas, while those ideas remained unchanged in anything essential.

But it was only the Magi, or learned class, that approached this correctness of religious belief. The popular Persian religion was Heathenism in the form of Nature worship. As in Phenicia and Syria, and later in Greece, the powers and phenomena of Nature were deified. Except among the Hebrews, Polytheism was now, as it had been from the time of the building of the tower of Babel, practically universal. The few who apprehended dimly the unity of God could not make it the doctrine of the people. If held at all, it was an esoteric, private opinion.

Everybody is acquainted to some extent with the religious systems of the Greeks and Romans. To acquire a knowledge of their mythologies is part of a liberal education. There is not time for even the briefest statement of the origin and probable *rationale* of their numerous divinities. To Nature worship, derived from Phenicia and Egypt, and the deification of the appearances of the sky or the heavens, as in India, they added the worship of heroes, historical and legendary. In addition to these, Rome, with a purer morality, deified the virtues.

When Greece conquered the world she carried with her, her language, her culture and philosophic thought. She could not carry her religion. Rome could propagate

her unrivalled polity and law. But she had no religion for man. She left to every conquered people the religion with which she found them. There might be elements in which all the Pagan religions were the same, but practically every people had its gods many, and its religion was local. It was the policy of Rome to make room in her Pantheon for all the respectable divinities of all the provinces of her empire. The natural effect would be, as in fact it was, to beget in the reflective a want of confidence in any.

But there were other more influential causes that led to this result. We must glance at the progress of Greek philosophy and trace its influence on popular religion. Socrates lived four hundred years before Christ. If we may judge by his influence, he was the greatest man in heathen antiquity. He was essentially a reformer. He was to the ancients what Bacon is to the moderns. He made philosophy subservient to the uses of common life. He led the Greek mind to the investigation of moral truth. His ethical system, as developed by Plato, and the doctrine of the latter in reference to the divine ideas, formed a new era, introduced a new school of thought, and have been potent in all subsequent ages in moulding human opinion. Both these great philosophers believed in the one God. Plato in a certain way even conceived of a Trinity. Neither had any faith in the popular Polytheism. From their times, the divorce between the

philosophic religion of the learned and the common religious beliefs becomes wider and wider.

In the time of Christ it had come to be the opinion of the best and most thoughtful men, that religion in the prevailing forms was only for the vulgar. Wise men, they said, had invented it for the safety of the State. It was necessary only for the good order of society, to keep the ignorant and evil in subjection by the terrors of the invisible world. Good manners required conformity to it. But intelligent worshippers were like "stage actors who did not feel their parts." It was said to be a matter of wonder that "one soothsayer could look another in the face without laughing." Prayer and adoration were hypocritically enacted from fear of the many. The intelligent and enlightened sacrificed to the gods in whom they felt no concern. This general scepticism among the educated gradually descended to the lower classes. Philosophy became the substitute for religion. The result was universal doubt, and blank Atheism. Man is essentially a religious being. A reaction was inevitable. Every gross superstition found its followers. Even such men as Pompey and Cæsar consulted the Chaldæan diviners. Astrologers were often banished from Rome, but as often recalled by the people. Tacitus speaks of them as "a race who, treacherous to those in power, fallacious to those who hope for power, are ever proscribed, yet will ever remain." The old religions were approaching dissolution. The fulness of time was at hand.

Socrates and Plato had felt the need of an authoritative teacher in all those questions that related to the Divine Being, the way of pardon, the mode of deliverance from sin and evil, and the future state of existence. Plato makes Socrates say, while instructing a pupil on the subject of acceptable worship: "It is therefore necessary to wait till some one may teach us how it behooves us to conduct ourselves, both towards the gods and men." To which the pupil answers: "When shall that time arrive, O Socrates, and Who shall that Teacher be? For most eagerly do I wish to see such a Man." As the time of Christ's Advent approached, the need of such a teacher became more manifest. Despair of ever attaining certainty in regard to the important questions of the Being of God, and man's life and destiny, was generally felt. The attitude of Pilate, asking of the Christ, "what is truth?" as if it were only certain that there was no such thing as truth, was shared by many a noble Roman. It was the fulness of time for the Incarnate Truth, to reveal the Father of all, to show Himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and to bring life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

At this period the prevailing philosophies were Stoicism and Epicureanism. The former was more suited to the Roman genius, the latter to the Greek. The ethical system of the Stoics was pure and lofty. In the theory of morality they left not much to be desired. But Stoicism

as a philosophy was essentially Pantheism. God and Nature were identified. The world was a development or modification of deity. The soul had no existence apart from the body. It was the duty of man to be indifferent to pain, to exercise a determined fortitude under all circumstances, to steel himself with resolute resistance against the necessities of his earthly condition and the terrible fatality that ruled the world. Suicide was justifiable, and held to be proof of manly virtue, when a man could no longer serve the State, or life had become a burden. Some of the noblest of the exemplars of Roman greatness died by their own hands.

Such a system could not but be productive of much virtue. Fortitude, valor, integrity, truthfulness, were especially cultivated. But it taught man's self-sufficiency. It made each man a god in himself. Its whole tendency was to minister to pride. The Stoics were now universally sceptics.\* Religions were all false, but were to be encouraged as a matter of State policy. All hearty faith in them was undermined. No truth of religion, of God, of the origin, being and destiny of man was settled. All was doubt and darkness. The Light of the world was the felt need.

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\* This is true of the highly cultivated and intellectual, not of the common people. Among the masses, especially outside the city, there was much earnest belief. The decay of belief was gradual and slow. Christianity had no easy victory. The fight was long and desperate. The victory came at last, not from "secondary causes" like those named by Gibbon, but from the new life, and the power of Christ by the Holy Spirit, that was manifestly in the Church. See Uhlhorn's "Conflict," etc.

Epicureanism was the opposite of Stoicism, and its effects were even more disastrous. The latter was Pantheism; this was Atheism. The world was formed by a chance concurrence of atoms. Strangely, some modern Agnostics have revived the philosophy of Lucretius. To avoid pain, not to bear it with fortitude, was a duty. Pleasure was the chief end of man. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the degenerated Epicurean Creed. To live a life of indifference to public and social duties, of ease, leisure and enjoyment, was the end and aim of existence. Expediency was the guide of action. The deity, if any existed, dwelt apart in serene indifference to the affairs of the world. Of course, when St. Paul at Athens disputed with Epicureans and Stoics and preached the doctrine of Repentance, Judgment and the Resurrection, they mocked at what seemed to them an absurdity. And yet it was what their hearts craved, and time would show it.

The various schools of thought, the Platonic and Aristotelean, the Stoic and Epicurean, added much to the sum of philosophical and ethical knowledge. They analyzed the mental faculties. They saw the complexity of human motives. Single partial truths were clearly seen and boldly expressed. But they were not combined in a consistent system. They presented many violent contradictions, impossible of reconciliation, in their principles. It wanted a Divine Teacher to harmonize the sum of truth,

and to give the impulse to seek and obey it; to show man's sinfulness, which was wholly ignored; to reveal the way of pardon; to open communion with God; to teach man's true dignity and end; to rebuke man's pride, and show that he has no sufficiency in himself; to present higher ends of living than sensual pleasure; to furnish an antidote to the grovelling superstitions that were everywhere the reaction from doubt and irreligion; to purify the social and sanctify the individual life. It was the fulness of time for the Redeemer's coming.\* Without it, universal social and moral ruin had been inevitable. Society would have fallen into dissolution.

The Roman empire, in its vast extent and unity, symbolized the coming kingdom. The Emperor claimed divine honors, and they were accorded with universal indifference. The State was all in which men had confidence. There was no other universal religion. Yet a universal religion was a dimly recognized necessity. The vast organization of Roman despotism was inadequate to unite mankind in brotherhood and worship. The central bond of unity, which had been sought in nature, in individual reason, and in social life, and which philosophers and statesmen had found to be vain and futile, was

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\* Seneca was the most advanced of the teachers of the time. He is supposed by some to have known St. Paul, or to have borrowed from the Christian writings. But see Bishop Lightfoot's Essay in his "Philippians." Seneca's ethical system was utterly without life. Any one might hold it and yet be grossly immoral.

yet to be realized. The Christ was unconsciously sought after without the knowledge of His nearness. There was a vague presentiment that a new era was dawning. It was not as statesmen conceived of it, in the triumph of national power. It was not the government of Rome that could maintain the welfare of the world. It was in vain that the stern image of might was decorated with oriental splendor, and that the approaching golden age was painted in the glowing colors of prophetic expectation. It was another King than the Cæsar that was to realize these hopes. He was to come from the East where, consciously or unconsciously, the hope of man rested. This belief found many an expression in the presentiments and beliefs that prevailed. He comes in an age that was prepared for Him and in which the need of Him was imperative. He comes to set up a kingdom before which Rome should crumble as clay. In a sense, of which we may now see the completeness and grandeur, it was the dispensation of the fulness of times. From that strange people, whose centre was Jerusalem, who are scattered throughout the empire, and who possessed the only vital religion, comes the world's Restorer and Redeemer. He comes to put a spirit of life into the decaying systems of men, and to work an entire, social, moral and spiritual regeneration of the world.\*

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\* See Döllinger's "The Gentile and the Jew," and read Uhlhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," and "Christian Charity in the Ancient Church."



IV.

JESUS CHRIST PROVING HIS DIVINITY BY  
HIS WISDOM.

ST. MATT. xii, 54 :

*And when He was come into His own country He taught in their synagogues insomuch that they were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom ?*

#### IV.

##### JESUS CHRIST PROVING HIS DIVINITY BY HIS WISDOM.\*

THERE are none who admit the inspiration of the Bible, who can fairly resist the evidence for the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is stated so often and so clearly by the sacred writers that its denial necessitates a modified view of the Holy Scriptures, according to which all their statements that do not agree with the preconceptions of the reader may be attributed to mistake or to the use of ordinary language in an unnatural, mystical and misleading sense.

The extraordinary boldness and thoroughness of critical enquiry in the present day, has established beyond reasonable question the authenticity of the principal

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\* This subject has been often treated. The best works upon it are, to name them in order: Ullmann's "Sinlessness of Jesus," Young's "The Christ of History," Bushnell's chapter in "Nature and the Supernatural" on the "Character of Jesus" (and separately published), Row's "The Jesus of the Evangelists." Bishop Hugh Miller Thompson and Dr. Greer have also essayed this great argument. It is attempted here to bring out more clearly than has been done, the bearing upon the argument, of the fact of Christ's statesmanship, if we may reverently so call it, His legislation for a Kingdom, and His establishing of His Kingdom, which He distinctly identifies with His Church in Matt. xvi. "Fear not, little flock: it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," surely, here is a Divine self-confidence and an omniscient foresight, and not a mere human aspiration.

writings comprising the Canon of the New Testament. A hostile rationalistic criticism has largely contributed to this result. On all sides it is admitted by unbelievers who understand and are capable of judging of the evidence, that the principal Apostolic Epistles have equal claims of genuineness with those of Cicero and Pliny, and that the memoirs of our Lord are at least as trustworthy in their record of facts as the histories of Xenophon or Herodotus, or Cæsar or Tacitus.

We accept the Sacred Canon on evidence that is to us conclusive. To us there is no question that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" in such sense that all its statements of doctrine are true, and its record of facts are free from material errors. But even if we should waive the question of the authorship and inspiration of some of the Books of Scripture, we might prove from its nature the divine origin of Christianity. Or, since the Christian system stands or falls with the character and claims of its Founder, we might demonstrate the divinity of Christ from the circumstances of His history and His actual work.\* We need not consider even His miracles, which He so confidently referred to as credentials of His teaching, and which made so profound an impression upon Nicodemus and multitudes of others. Taking the Gospels as reporting His teaching with a fair degree of accuracy; taking St. Paul's four undisputed Epistles at

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\* See Lecture IX.

their value apart from their inspiration ; taking the Acts of the Apostles as the earliest chapter in the History of the Church ; estimating all this literature from the standard of historical criticism as applied to other like documents ; considering, also, the fact of the Church with its Faith, Sacraments, and Polity, from its beginning on through the subsequent ages, and you have the grounds of an argument of irresistible force in favor of the truth of the Christian Revelation. But I propose now a more limited view. We may narrow down the basis of argument to the wisdom of the teaching of Christ, supposing only that the records of that teaching are in the main authentic, which is undeniable. From this alone as ■ premise, His divinity, by which is meant His Deity, may be proved. It is a mode of argument that has been too much neglected, so many others are there which are abundantly conclusive and readier at hand. It is to this arduous subject that I now invite your candid and thoughtful attention. It will abundantly reward it, however imperfect may be its treatment.

Whence hath this man this wisdom, was the wondering enquiry of those in His own country who had known Him from His youth, when they listened with astonishment to His teaching in the synagogue. That He had remarkable wisdom was the reluctant confession of His enemies. We read of their marvelling at His doctrines, of their being utterly confounded when they attempted to catch Him in

His words, of their not daring to ask Him any more questions. It was the involuntary feeling that He spake with authority ; that the truth of what He uttered had a marvellous transparency and power of working conviction. From the admissions of His adversaries something at least may be inferred. It is difficult to see any merit in one you utterly hate or even dislike, especially one towards whom your whole soul rises in violent antagonism. So was Christ regarded by the Scribes and Pharisees. If He were but a man, with only such acquirements as He could have gained as a laboring man at Nazareth, could He have extorted such confessions? Was not His wisdom at least superhuman?

But in order to estimate properly the force of the argument from the wisdom of Christ, we must consider the circumstances of His education and the influences which, if He were but a man, would have contributed to the moulding of His character and His opinions. The world has abounded with great men. But you will always find that the great man is, to a large extent, the product of his own age.

Take the case of the statesman who has left his mark upon his own and after ages. He has built his views of policy, of public economy, of constitutional rights and legislation upon the principles of his predecessors. As a matter of course he must have been profoundly versed in history, in the growth of law and institutions, in the devel-

opment of society, in the nature and science of government. Every single step he could take in advance of his age, must have been upon the ground of past achievement. His feet rested firmly upon the past, or he could hold and maintain no new position. The past must form the groundwork of all stable advancement. In the business of statesmanship radical reformation means destruction. No true progress is ever attained on any utopian theory. Progress is a growth. The present lay in the past. The future lies in the present as truly as the flower and the fruit are enveloped in the bud. The great statesman is one who, from his knowledge of the past and present, is able to anticipate the future. He carefully notes the tendencies of the principles which he sees in operation. His insight into the spirit and needs of his time enable him to mould and give shape and distinctness to the predominant opinions and influences around him. But he originates nothing. His principles are deductions from premises afforded him. His foresight, his advance of others, is from his deeper knowledge of the past and his profounder comprehension of the meaning of the present and of the direction of its development. If you were to take the views and work of any statesman of whatever period, as gathered from a careful study of his speeches, writings, and public measures, though you were ignorant of the man, and when and where he lived, you could infer with the utmost certainty his place in history,

his country and his age. From the Code of Justinian you could tell the time and nationality of its compiler. The study of the Constitution of the United States, with the papers in the "Federalist," would sufficiently inform you when and where that great instrument was formed, and its relation to the Constitution of the British Government. Read what remains of the writings of Washington, or Hamilton, or Jefferson, and however ignorant you might be concerning them, you would assuredly know that they were Americans, of colonies that had won their independence and were united in a nation in the latter part of the eighteenth century. A man with the political principles of a Daniel Webster, back in the age of Cæsar Augustus, would have been a greater miracle than any that is recorded in either Testament. Rather we should say he would have been, not a miracle, but an impossibility. The idea is unthinkable.

From the case of the great philosophical teachers, this law of growth and development is still more obvious. Had not Socrates lived, there could have been no Plato. Had not Plato lived, there could have been no Aristotle. No philosopher has ever originated an independent purely original system. Every great philosopher must be the outgrowth of the past, whether his system be the result of particular tendencies or the reaction from consequences involved in the systems of his predecessors.

It is not necessary to dwell upon this point. Every



student of the history of Philosophy knows how every system has grown from and given birth to others, and that the most original thinkers are subject to this law of development. So, also, of great religious teachers, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed. By the same law you can place them, and account for them. You can show why and what they were, and rationally explain their influence. We need not consider them, because they present no parallels to the case before us, being only reformers, or if you choose so to call them, human founders of great religions.

Now, how was it with Jesus Christ? He was the founder of a Kingdom.\* His Gospel was the Gospel of the Kingdom. To this Kingdom which He was establishing most of His teaching related. The chief merit of "*Ecce Homo*," a work that made a great impression a few years since, was that the writer saw that Christ was pre-eminently a legislator, and treated at length of His legislation. In a true sense, we speak of the Christian religion. But it is a conception foreign to the Gospels. Indeed, to all the New Testament writers Christianity is an organism. It is the Gospel entrusted to the Church for its universal proclamation. It is embodied in the Church. It is organized in the Kingdom. It has teaching, polity, ordinances, insti-

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\* Few, if any, of the writers who would prove the Lord's Divinity from His teaching and work, Bushnell, Row, etc., deal with His statesmanship, His founding a Kingdom identified in its earthward aspects with the Church Catholic. Herein is an argument of tremendous force and efficacy. This lecture deals chiefly with this view. The IXth considers other aspects of this great subject.

tutions. But it is a Kingdom wholly unlike, radically different from any other kingdom the world has ever seen. Whence did Christ derive the principles of His statesmanship?

He was totally ignorant of all heathen learning. He had never seen the vast stores of Greek and Roman literature. He could have known nothing of the politics or the legislation of the nations of antiquity or of the Roman empire. He had hardly been beyond the obscure and disreputable town of Nazareth since His earliest infancy. There was no distinguished school in which he could have been instructed. Indeed, it was known and remarked by His countrymen that He had never learned, and was therefore destitute of human education. And had the advantages of books been ever so largely afforded Him, He could have had no time for their study. He was of a poor family. He must have passed all His days in hard manual labor. Nor could He have learned from the society and converse of cultivated men. There were no such men in Nazareth, and His circumstances debarred Him from all such opportunities. Clearly He did not get His system from the heathen world. There was nothing in Heathenism that could teach Him any of its elements, had He been perfectly conversant with all its literature and history.

Nor could He have derived the idea of the Kingdom He announced from His Jewish associations. Whatever there was in their ancient prophets that might be harmo-

nized with it by a spiritual interpretation, it was utterly foreign to all the notions and modes of thinking of the schools of thought that monopolized all learning among the Jews. According to the prevailing views, it was antagonistic to the Hebrew Scriptures. He could have derived nothing whatever from the prevalent exclusive, intolerant Judaism of His day. His age could not have given Him even the germs and rudiments of His principles. He set Himself in violent hostility to all the cherished opinions of His age and nation.

He pursued also a plan which was unexampled in all history, of beginning with the poor and the illiterate, classes which Judaism regarded as accursed. He chose from among them His Apostles, the officers whom He especially instructed and intrusted with His work. And while there was in human probability nothing that could indicate success, and while the death of a malefactor was ever present to His view, He declared that the gates of hell could not prevail against His Church. He likened His Kingdom to a grain of mustard seed which, though the least of all seeds, grows into a tree, affording habitation to the fowls of the air and shelter to the beasts of the field.

Unlike all successful reformers, He was not favored by the great and the influential. He was bitterly opposed by their mortal hatred. To human appearance everything was against Him, and yet His success was precisely what He expected and foretold. The Kingdom He

established has grown and increased according to His announcements. It has ever been, and is to-day, the great instrument of the moral regeneration and true civilization of man. It extends wherever there is true enlightenment: for to its influence the progress of man in truth and virtue is directly or indirectly attributable. By all who have at heart the welfare of the race, the extension of this Kingdom of Jesus Christ is rightly regarded as the hope of the world.

Now, could a mere man in the circumstances of Jesus of Nazareth by any possibility have originated the idea? You cannot imagine a greater impossibility.

But consider also His teachings, His principles.\* They were entirely new to the world of Heathenism and of Judaism. There was nothing in the teaching that prevailed about Him from which He could have developed them. His great ideas were as foreign to the Judaism of His day as they were to the philosophic world. Where, for example, could He have gotten His idea of the Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man? What school,

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\*The view here taken is of course controverted, but we think not successfully. Prof. Toy, of Harvard, *e. g.*, thinks the Poet Aratus expressed in Macedon in the third century before Christ, a view, "For we are his offspring," which *may* have become known in Galilee in the time of our Lord and given Him the view of the Divine Fatherhood, which he so clearly expresses in the Sermon on the Mount, as St. Paul had gotten hold of the quotation!—"Judaism and Christianity," pp. 83-6.

The arguments to prove that these other teachings of our Lord were an "evolution" are equally far-fetched. Surely the Lord's peculiar teaching was "original."

what teaching of His own times, could have suggested it? By what study could He have come by the doctrines, as He taught and exemplified them, of repentance and pardon, of the reconciliation of God and man, of divine Communion and Fellowship, of the Life of God in the Soul, of universal beneficence, of life from the dead and immortality?

How could the poor and comparatively youthful Galilean carpenter command such respect for His teachings, that they should be received as absolutely authoritative, setting at rest forever the minds of all who should receive them concerning those highest truths of which but the faintest glimpses had been afforded, and in regard to which the most enlightened were in the utter darkness of doubt and scepticism? Where did He get His method of instruction so foreign to any that had ever been pursued? Whence that clearness with which He reveals the Infinite? You cannot possibly explain it unless you admit that He was what He claimed to be, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He did not derive His ideas from study. They were not in the world. No study could have revealed them. They were native to His mind, or He could not have announced them so spontaneously and without effort. There must have been something common to Him and Deity. He must have fully known, perfectly comprehended, the Infinite Godhead, or He could not have thus revealed Him. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite, and yet such comprehension was His. He must have

participated in the divine nature. He must have been the Son of God. It is the only possible hypothesis by which you can explain the wisdom of His teaching.

Let us recapitulate one or two of the points noticed, and add some other considerations which will help to bring out and to impress the full force of the argument. Every man who ever made his mark upon the page of the world's history has had all the advantages of leisure, of study, and of human intercourse. The influences around him have contributed to form his character. The knowledge he has acquired from study and literary converse and society, have gone into the texture of his mind. Though he be in advance of his age, he must stand with it. There are multitudes about him who are in all respects like him. It is just as a high mountain has around it numerous others that are only a little less conspicuous. Its summit may overlook them, but they all stand on the same base. But Jesus of Nazareth stands absolutely alone. His age gave Him nothing—study, refined society, learned converse, nothing. The child of poverty and of obscurity, the Nazarean carpenter who “had never learned,” who was a stranger to all heathen wisdom and rabbinical erudition alike, comes forth at the age of thirty with a perfect system of absolute Truth, and as the founder of a Kingdom perfectly unique in character, endued with the forces that must give it universal ascendancy, and affording the only really vital elements of human progress.

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If you duly consider what was against Him: His youth, for which Judaism must have despised Him ; the shortness of His ministry, being but about three years ; His deficiency of human learning and culture, and doubtless of the manners which a so-called refined society must give ; His Nazarean life, in poverty, at a laborious occupation, which could have afforded Him little leisure ; His Galilean associations ; His constant converse with poverty, and ignorance, and rusticity ; His setting Himself against the whole current of His age ; His unsparing exposure of its hypocrisies and corruptions, and then think of His wisdom, the grandeur, the sublimity of His doctrines, reaching infinitely beyond all that the profoundest teachers had assayed to guess at or but ineffectually to conceive, Truth divine, absolute, delivered always without argument, in statement of beautiful simplicity, level to the meanest capacity, yet whose depth of meaning no study can exhaust ; the final the absolute religion, the ultimate philosophy of life, commending itself by its innate fitness to every human heart ; incarnated in a living organism, embodied in a polity, a kingdom, "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth," thus preserving its identity unadulterate and without essential change ; destined, as time has shown and is showing, to the general prevalence and ascendancy which He designed and predicted for it, with such sublime confidence in its future:—think of all this, and then answer the question,

Whence hath this man this wisdom? Can you hesitate for a moment to accept His own solution, that He came down from Heaven, that He was one with the Father, and that in Him God was manifested and revealed! No other hypothesis can stand for a moment before an enlightened reasonable view of the case.\*

Compare Him with Plato, the greatest of all philosophers. Plato had mastered all learning by study under the best masters and by foreign travel. He had every facility as a learner and teacher. He had the abundant patronage of the great. A long life was devoted to his calling. He was enabled thus to found the noblest, the most influential of human philosophies. And yet how much there is in his writings which is evidently false. How much of the Heathenism, the false religion, the futile dialectics of the age in which He lived. How much of weakness, sensuality, absurdity and contradiction. What admirer of Plato could ever take him as an oracle? Who would deny that, great as he was, he has gathered in his writings more of chaff than of pure wheat?

We turn in despair from Plato to Jesus of Nazareth for all our highest knowledge. We turn from specula-

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\* The fact of the sinlessness of Jesus, for it is a fact, adds much to the strength of the argument. His challenge made to his enemies, "which of you convicteth Me of sin," was never fairly met. It is evident from the Gospels that He had no consciousness of sin. His work, His teaching, His sacrifice, all depend upon His being sinless. But if He was sinless, He was more than man. The argument will carry you to this, that He was the God-man. See Ullmann's "The Sinlessness of Jesus," used to prove His Divinity.



tion to infallible certainty, from doubt to the authoritative teacher, from the human to the divine philosophy, which satisfies the reason, gives peace to the conscience and pours the full flood of its heavenly light into the soul. Whence hath this man this wisdom? Whence could He have had it but from His full participation in the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God?

Compare Him with Shakespeare, the greatest of poets, who is said to have derived least of all authors from the learning of the past, who is of all men the most original and the most profoundly versed in the knowledge of human nature. But his plots are largely borrowed from earlier stories and from history. His classical and historical lore are conspicuous throughout his wonderful plays. He was scarcely more independent than others of the past, of the influences that form character and the adventitious helps afforded by his age. Who shall dare to affirm that the mysteries of the human heart were known to him as to the carpenter's son of Galilee? He alone of men knew what was in man as by an omniscient insight. He alone in His teaching and His work comprehended and made full provision for every want of every soul of every age, and country, and race. Learn of the poet, what he has to teach you. Let him minister to your delight, if you will take the good and reject the evil. You can easily tell whence he had his wisdom. There is nothing about it unaccountable, living as he did in the

greatest, most inspiring age of English literature. But let Jesus of Nazareth alone be your Master. Look to Him alone for all higher knowledge of the mysteries of life and being. His wisdom is of Heaven, and not of earth. It is inexplicable except as you admit that He was the eternal Word or wisdom, Who was with God and was God, and Who was made flesh, and did for us men and for our salvation what the universal Creeds confess.

There is a seeming irreverence in such comparisons. They are rather contrasts. The greatest of men, philosophers, poets, statesmen, stand before Christ as the human in the presence of the Divine, as man in the presence of God!

It is the fashion now to exalt the old Eastern religions by those who know but little about them. It were almost profane to compare the system of Christ with Mohammedanism, with its extravagances, its puerilities, its sensuous and licentious character—a religion which panders to human passions and still must be propagated by the sword; or with the Buddhist and Brahminical religions, with “the philosophic Atheism of the one, and the enormous Polytheism of the other,” and “the idolatry, the Pantheism, the moral abominations, the monstrous forms of human society, that have grown up beneath their shelter.” Whatever gems of beauty and grains of good you may find in them, you turn from them in disgust to the loveliness, the purity, the moral sublimity of the heavenly

wisdom of Jesus. They are all of the earth, the outgrowths of human reason and of human depravity. The wisdom of Jesus Christ can alone afford you satisfaction. This alone is wholly and absolutely from God. This alone commends itself to the mind, and heart, and soul as Divine.

O how limited, narrow, vain and futile is all the wisdom of man ! How contradictory and full of error !

Seek not, my brethren, your masters in this world. Go for the true wisdom to the feet of Jesus. Learn of Him. Learn of the Great Teacher. Take Him as your guide. He will lead you to the Fountain of infinite Truth. He will open to your thirsty soul the springs of all knowledge. His Word, which is Life, shall be in you ; and you shall come, with all who are in Him and love Him, to the comprehension of the height and depth of the love of God which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God.

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Mr. Toy in his recent work, "*Judaism and Christianity*," attempts to derive the distinctive Christian ideas and principles from Judaism, as developed and modified from time to time by outside systems or thought. But his view of the Christianity of Christ and His Apostles is a low Socinian view, and even with such view he fails utterly to account for the Christ of the Gospels and the facts of Apostolic History. He denies the miraculous in the New Testament as well as in the Old, and yet he does seem to believe in and to postulate God. His method is that of the most ultra rationalistic of the Germans. Yet he writes reverently and without any very apparent anti-Christian animus.



V.

JESUS CHRIST THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD.

ST. JOHN i, 14 :

*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*

## V.

### JESUS CHRIST THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD.

ON this Christmas morning we are all Christians. The young and the old, the godly and the worldly, the believers and the unbelievers, all partake in its festivities, and all share in its joys. Christmas is a FACT throughout Christendom. Never has there been a time through the long Christian centuries when it has not been known as a fact—a fact, too, of the most potent and world-wide significance. And though the day be kept because it is a social custom, or because of its beneficence, or because there is a high and rational joy in the family reunions, the mutual gifts, the innocent games, the carols of the young and the social pleasures that mark the time, yet there are none who can altogether disconnect it in thought or feeling from the first Christmas, or fail to hear across the centuries the echoes of the angels' song: "Glory be to God in the highest. Peace on earth, good will to men."

At Christmas, perhaps more than at any other time, more than even on Good Friday, or Easter, or Pentecost, the world recognizes the fact and the power of Christianity, and sees and admits its origin. It is an axiom, and a necessary postulate of thought, not only that every

effect must have a cause, but the cause must be adequate to the effect. Great effects must have great causes. Christendom, of which Christmas is the most central fact, must be accounted for. Whence its source? Whence its origin? How account for and explain it? But one answer is possible: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The Blessed Virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, conceived and bare a Son, and the Son of God becomes the Son of Mary, Jesus the Saviour, Emmanuel, God with us.

The Incarnation is the fact which accounts for all the other facts of Christianity. It is the doctrine that lies at the basis of all its other doctrines, and gives them their meaning and efficacy. If this is a fact, every doctrine growing out of it and depending upon it is TRUE. If it be not a fact, Christian history has grown out of nothing. The mighty Stream has no source. So that as a necessity of thought we must postulate the Incarnation. So mighty a cause is essential. The Son of God did come in our nature into our world. And from Him doing for man what the Creed sets forth, the results which we see have followed. All men, consciously or unconsciously, see and believe it. On Christmas day there are no open infidels.

Why, then, do we keep Christmas? For lower and partial reasons possibly, but even these involve the highest reasons. It is because from the time of the first Christmas God is manifest in our flesh; and all we enjoy or



hope for of good to-day ; all that this Cathedral, which is one of tens of thousands of churches, is to us ; all its magnificence of praise and adoration ; all its teaching from pulpit, and font, and altar ; all the meaning and beneficence of Christianity, finds its origin, cause and sufficient explanation in the fact and doctrine for the commemoration of which we are here to-day: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory: the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth."

Why, again, do we reckon time from the birth of Christ? Why is all human history either before or after Christ? It is because that Birth is the pivotal point of time, on which all before or after in some way, immediately or remotely, depends. The previous ages were in some way a preparation for it. Christ came in the fullness of time, not only as respects Judaism, but Heathenism as well. All historic movements had been converging towards this moment in the reign of Cæsar Augustus. Greece had carried her conquests and civilization over all the East to India. Rome had brought the East and West under her imperial sway. The central spot of the world was Bethlehem, of Judea. Thitherwards all men looked who would find the true Light in the pervading moral and spiritual darkness. Thitherwards turned the steps of the Magi, representatives of the Gentile world. There was a momentary pause, a hush, a general expectancy. The

portals of heaven opened for an instant. The gentle shepherds on the plains, watching their flocks, heard the *Gloria in Excelsis* of the angels, and came to worship Him with Mary and Joseph. Otherwise unobserved, the greatest event of all history came to pass. There was no room for Him in the inn, and the hearts of all but the most humble excluded Him. But HE WAS COME. The Lord of Life, and Light, and Glory was born into our world ! The Jewish prophecies and the unconscious prophecies of Paganism were fulfilled. The world knew Him not, but HE WAS HERE. The Incarnate God was in the rude manger. The world, with a true instinct, has joined with the Church in recognizing in the fact the starting point of history.

What could follow but all we are told in the inspired records of the Gospel? His life, His teaching, His Death and Resurrection, His Spirit's coming, His Church, His Word, His Sacraments, and the beginning of that historic process growing through the ages and which we see to-day in Christendom, and all its world of meaning. Man had lost Eden. In Jesus Christ come to redeem and save us, even in the manger of the stable in Bethlehem were begun the stirrings of the mighty forces of which the end must be to all, born into union with our Humanity united to Godhead in His Person, a redeemed and restored humanity, Paradise regained.

A minister, not of the historic Church, but a dear

friend and an able and learned man, once said to me : " I enjoy Christmas, but see no religious significancy in it. The fact of the Incarnation I, of course, accept, but it has, to my apprehension, no bearing on Christian life, no necessary organic relation to Christianity. Its purpose and meaning is in this, that it was necessary in order to the atonement." He was a representative of many. His remark illustrates the meagerness of the ordinary theological thinking of the present day.

What is the fact of the Incarnation? It is nothing less than this : The only Son of God took upon Himself our nature. He was made man. Try to apprehend, not *how* it could be, but the fact. No fact is to be denied or to be deemed the less a fact because of its inscrutable or mysterious nature. What follows if it be a fact? The work of Christ for man's salvation follows. The Redemption by His Death and Resurrection follows. The Church, which is Christ's Body and of which His Spirit is the life, follows of consequence. Christ in His Church, through His members, going about doing good, the Incarnation extended, Christ in history, the proclamation by the Church of the everlasting Gospel, Christ in His Church going forth in all the world conquering and to conquer, all this follows. As surely as in the life-germ of the seed is the tree and all its fruits, so surely the Birth of Christ, God-man, brings into the world the whole redemptive process of which the Church of Christ, or

Christ in the Church, is the instrumentality and the restoration of mankind the result. The angels may or may not have seen the end in its beginning; at least the words of their Christmas carol meant it all, and could mean no less: "Glory to God in the highest. Peace on earth, good will towards men."

Is God knowable? Is He conversable with men? Can finite man apprehend and know the Infinite? Or must we be Agnostics? Christmas day answers all such questions. God indeed, as conceived by Deism or Pantheism, is not knowable. The God of Deism is far off, inaccessible, unconcerned, in His ineffable remoteness, with human weal. The God of Pantheism is the Law of Nature, the Great All, in whose immensity man is nothing. Not thus, not in such conceptions, can we know God, and have communion and fellowship with Him and love Him. The only true God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Revealed in the word and types of prophecy before His coming, He is manifested in the Incarnation. Would you know God? See Him in the face of Jesus Christ, who reveals Him. "He that hath seen Me," He tells us, "hath seen the Father." In Him we may know God. In the Body or Church of the Son of God we are God's children. In the Incarnate life of His Body God dwells in us by His Spirit. No longer is there a wall of separation. Heaven is re-opened. It is here. We are in it. We are new-born into its citizen-

ship. In the kingdom or Church of Christ into which we are born anew, which is the meaning of our Baptism, regenerated into the possession of the Life of Christ's Body, God is our Father, because Christ is our Redeemer and the Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier. The Sacraments are nothing if they do not convey to us Christ's own Incarnate life, and so become the pledge and seal of the life of God in the soul.

The Incarnation shows us what God is. So also it reveals what man is. Otherwise we should not know whence and what we are. It is much debated by some, who have momentarily forgotten that they are Christians, whether man is but a higher order of brutes, a development through successive gradations of animals from "the promise and potency of life" that was in the star dust of which, by gradual evolution, the worlds were made. Learn to-day that man is of God. God made him in His own image, or there could be no divine image in him to restore. That image in us was blurred, faded, stained, its traces almost illegible through sin, but it was there. The Spirit of Christ uniting man with God His Father by means of the new Birth into His divine Humanity, brings it out into more than its original perfection, and the world sees and confesses that the man in Christ is like God.

Learn from the Incarnation the capacities of man's nature. The Son of God can make it His own. He

descends into it. He takes it into personal union with His divine nature. He gives it a "promise and potency" of more than an earthly life, of a life divine and eternal. See in the Incarnation man's dignity. See in it also his destiny.

The kingdoms of nature are successive, one above another, from the lowest to the highest. Into the inorganic world God incarnated a germ of life, and out of it the vegetable kingdom rises. Into this He breathes a germ of life of a higher order, and the animal kingdom follows. Into the animal world, from Himself He breathes the breath of life, and the human kingdom is here, dominating all beneath it. Through sin it becomes fallen, disordered, and far from God, and loses the divine communion. But in "the fulness of time" the Son of God takes our nature upon Him, and the result is the Christ-kingdom. The Incarnate Life gathers to it in Christ's Body a redeemed and regenerated race. The second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, is the Head of the new creation, and the Lord and King of the new world.

It is no less an event than the manifested life on earth of God in man, from which the new Creation follows that we commemorate to-day. The Incarnation is extended in the Church by means of the Holy Sacraments rightly received,\* and the first Christmas begins and guarantees

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\* It is Jeremy Taylor who speaks of Sacraments as "the extension of the Incarnation."

the process to the end and consummation. Well may we, then, rejoice. Well may we celebrate the Eucharistic Feast and offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and feed upon the Flesh and Blood of our Incarnate Lord and Saviour, whereby His life is in us and we live in Him, and our souls and bodies, in membership of His Body, shall grow up into His likeness, and be preserved unto everlasting life and fitted for His joy.





VI.

JESUS CHRIST THE HEIR OF THE WORLD.

ROMANS iv, 13 :

*For the promise that He should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham and his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

## VI.

### JESUS CHRIST THE HEIR OF THE WORLD.

THE promise to Abraham and his seed had direct reference to the Messiah. Writing to the Galatians, St. Paul thus explains it: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one : And to thy seed, which is Christ." It is in Christ, therefore, that all the families of the earth are to be blessed, or in other words, *Christ is the Heir of the world.* This, then, is the fruitful subject of our meditations on this New Year's morning, *Jesus Christ the Heir of the world.*

We may first remark that it was the purport of all the prophecies, from that in the Garden of Eden to the last of Malachi, rendered more and more certain by reiteration ; developed, expanded, and set in a variety of lights as it was passed on from Prophet to Prophet through the long ages, that Christ should be the Heir of the world. The Gentiles were to come to His light. All kings were to bow down before Him. All nations were to do Him service. The heathen were to be His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth His possession.

Hence, when the fulness of time had come, the angel, in the annunciation of His birth, proclaims "good tidings,"

which shall be to "all people." When the aged Simeon took Him as an infant child in his arms, he foresaw that He was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as to be "the glory of His people Israel." St. Luke showed that He was to be, not the Messiah only of the Jews, but also of all mankind, by tracing His genealogy up to Adam, the father of the human race. And St. John shows that He became flesh ; and St. Paul, that He took our nature upon Him. So was He to realize the meaning of His name "Emmanuel," God with us, and to be man's Redeemer, and the Prophet, Priest, and King of the whole world !

During His life on earth He claimed the world as His inheritance. It is true, His first mission was to the Jews. It was fitting that He, who was to sit on the throne of David, should find His first subjects among the Jewish people. His reputed father was a Jew. His mother was of the lineage of David. He was the Messiah of the Jewish Scriptures and for the Jewish nation. It was necessary that His Kingdom, which was to be the development and flower of Judaism, should ground itself therein. Out of Jerusalem must go forth the Law, which was to command the obedience of the nations. Hence He was called "the King of the Jews." He came first to gather in and save the lost sheep of the House of Israel. But He claimed to have other sheep not of that fold. Of these, also gathered into the flock of a Spiritual Israel, He was

to be the Shepherd. He taught that His life was to be the Ransom for the many, and that being lifted up upon the Cross He would draw all men unto Him by the power of His sufferings and His resurrection life. He founded His Church for the whole world. He commissioned His ministers to disciple all nations and to preach the Gospel to every creature. Ascending into Heaven, He poured forth Gifts which were to be for all men. His Spirit is sent as the Sanctifier of all His members. The establishment of the Church among the Gentiles was not an after-thought. It was not simply the result of the rejection of the Gospel by the Jewish nation. It had been contemplated in prophecy. It was intended from the beginning by Christ Himself. Every step in His work looked forward to it as its end. Had He remained on earth, He could have been no more than the King of the Jews. His Church would have been local and national. But His Ascension, and the resultant Gifts of His Spirit to represent Him, to realize His Spiritual presence to all believers, took away from His Kingdom every limitation. At the right hand of God exalted, He put Himself, as the Head of the Church, in a relation of equal nearness to all in Him, of every land and of every race. Being Himself in Heaven, His presence in the Church being spiritual, His Church must be Catholic, or universal.

Again, the Apostles claimed for their Master that He should be the Heir of the world. It was seen first by St.

Peter that since God is no respecter of persons, in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him, and that the Gentiles were to be received with equal privileges as His Spiritual subjects. St. Paul devoted his vast abilities with superhuman energy to the conversion of the Gentiles, and to the laying of foundations, broad and catholic, able to sustain the grand superstructure, of the universal Kingdom of Christ. Most of the Apostles carried the Gospel into distant lands with the design of universal conquest, for Him who was to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In all the New Testament writings it is claimed for the Redeemer that He is the Heir of all things : the Mediator between God and the human race, dying for all men, making in Heaven intercession for all believers of every nation, wielding the powers for the subduing of every enemy, and overcoming all opposition : Whom all are yet to acknowledge as Lord and God, to Whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear in enforced or glad confession of allegiance.

When the last of the Apostles had departed this life for their higher and more glorious Ministry, the Kingdom of Christ was well established in almost every part of the Roman empire, which was then co-extensive with the civilized world. It was evident to those examining its structure and nature that it was designed to be universal. It had a Ministry and a compact and well appointed organization, which were assuming the responsibility and

recognizing the duty of winning for Christ His rightful inheritance of the world. Its Charter required that all should be admitted to membership, whatever their national or race peculiarities. Its doctrines were adapted to the acknowledged needs of universal man. It had a vitality, it inspired an enthusiasm and an aggressive energy which could not fail to make its progress certain, rapid, resistless.

Heathenism was crumbling into decay and ruin. Few believed in the gods whose worship was enjoined by usage and State authority. Philosophy was Pantheistic and Atheistic. There was nothing in which the heart could rest, no solution of doubt, no satisfying answer to the deep questionings of the soul, no hope of immortality to compensate the ills and anxieties of life. The world was craving for truth, groping for light, feeling after God if haply it might find Him, all the while unconscious of His nearness, in a thousand ways showing its feeling of the need, its blind expectancy of the coming Redeemer.

In such a time the sign of the Cross is uplifted in every nation. Messengers everywhere bear it aloft in the face of death. Multitudes rally around it and find new life. It is a grand spectacle, this setting up of the Church of God in the midst of a corrupt and decaying civilization, in the place of barren faiths and effete religions. Here at last is truth. Here is certainty. Here is a religion for which to live, to work, and if need be, to suffer and to die. There is an end of doubt and fruitless questionings. Life and

immortality are brought to light by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Empire of Christ makes its way in spite of opposition and persecution. No imperial edict could crush it. Every enginery of the devil or man is powerless against it. Opposition stimulates missionary zeal. From seeming defeat and overthrow, it rises triumphant, its persecutors subdued and marching in its train. In two hundred years after the death of St. John, it is seen to be the vitality of the empire. Kings become its nursing fathers. It receives the homage of the great. It is the salt of society. It is the vital regenerating power of a new civilization.

There are some men who deny Christianity. They might with as good reason deny all modern history, deny England, France, Germany, America, deny civilization, deny science, deny the heavens above them and the earth on which they stand. There could not be a more glaring absurdity than the denial of a fact which has ignored all denials, which, against all denial and obstruction, has proved itself the life of men, has determined the course of modern history, and has been a power of untold blessings to the world. Christianity is a fact. Facts do not admit of denial. You may seek their explanation, their origin, their meaning, their influence. But you cannot remove them out of the way, any more than you can obliterate the past and make that not to be which has been and is.

When the Roman empire crumbled in pieces, it was seen



to how great an extent Jesus Christ had made good His claim to be the Heir of the world. Each of its parts was instinct with a life which was confessedly of Heaven. Society was in a measure Christianized. Christianity pervaded every class of its peoples, entered into its laws, its ideas, its institutions, and was the salt which preserved it from corruption. Men bowed the knee to Christ, recognizing His sovereignty, whoever might be the earthly rulers. Governments might change their form and character, but beneath and above all human government there was a Kingdom in the world of which the authority was not of the world and not questionable. Obedience to it was implicit, because grounded in love. Order, harmony, righteousness, holiness, were its principles, however short its subjects might fall of their realization.

Had it not been for Christianity, organized in Christ's Kingdom, the darkness of the "dark ages" would have been Cimmerian. Society would have been dissolved. There would have ensued an endless night of barbarism. But there were everywhere in the darkest times centres of light, the glory of which shone abroad and irradiated the world.\* There was a spirit brooding over the social and political chaos. It was a formative period. The great Christian nations were to come forth, free of all vestige of the ancient Paganism, with a new civilization, with Christian ideas and institutions, with an avowed fealty and sub-

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\* Read, by all means, Maitland's "The Dark Ages."

jection to Jesus Christ. No fair reader of history can doubt that Christianity has been the basis, the constant living principle, of whatever is best, most worthy of regard and reverence in our modern civilization. It is a blessing to man just so far, and so far only, as Christianity has originated and moulded it, so far as it has assimilated Christian ideas and been fruitful of Christian results.

I speak not now of the shortcomings of the Church, the corruptions of Christianity, beneath which it has been difficult at times to perceive the glory and beauty of the divine original. In spite of all this, the Church, in all ages, has known her obligation to spread abroad the Gospel and extend the sway of the Redeemer. Cold as at times has grown her love, lax as may have been her principles and her faith, near as she may have come to being absorbed in the world, still she never could wholly lose the consciousness of her mission and duty, to break down the kingdom of sin, Satan and death, and to bring the world under the authority of its rightful Sovereign. There have been long ages in which she has done little to this end. But she never repudiated her Charter, never denied her original commission. She has been from the first essentially an aggressive body, ever encroaching upon the domains of sin. Her members have been ever missionaries in outward profession, though doing little to further their vocation. And the results of her work, whenever she has put forth her strength, as in the first centuries,

in the early part of the middle ages, and in the present day—for never was her vitality more manifest than now—proves that it is no groundless hope that the whole world shall eventually become, in fact as of right, the domain of Jesus Christ. The attitude of Christ's Church, the power of His truth, its recognized adaptability to human needs, its grand achievements, are convincing proofs to dispassionate minds, that notwithstanding the slowness with which the work progresses, Christ will yet make good His title to the heirship of the world. All Christians pray for it, as often as they repeat the prayer He taught us: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven." Would that all might work for it! Would that all might devote their time, energies and substance to the great end for which a Christian lives! Still Christ will take care of His own work. There is time enough for Him to Whom "a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." He has gone forth from the small upper room in Jerusalem, which once contained all His faithful Judæan adherents, "conquering and to conquer." Christendom to-day is the evidence of His triumphant progress. He will go forth conquering and to conquer even to the end and the final consummation.

It is now some eighteen hundred and ninety years since the Infant Jesus lay in the rude manger in Bethlehem. There was not room for Him in the inn. Nor even to this day has there been made full room for Him

in the world of which He is the Heir. Let us begin from this day to make room for Him in our hearts. It is a fitting time for good resolutions. Let it be our resolve from this day forward to invite His presence, to let Him reign within us, to be wholly His in thought, word and deed. The past is irretrievable. Its lost opportunities are lost forever. But the future, with all its opportunities, is ours. Let us go forth to meet them "without fear and with a manly heart." Let us realize our position and duties as citizens and as Christians. Let us enter into that "one increasing purpose" which, as we have seen, runs through all the ages. Let us put ourselves in conscious active harmony with the vital agencies by which that divine purpose, conceived in Eternity, shall reach its complete fulfillment. Standing on the threshold of a new year, let us look onward and upward, as we join our forces to help on the predestined issue, to make the Christ, in fact as in name and title, the HEIR OF THE WORLD.

VII.

JESUS CHRIST MANIFESTING FORTH HIS GLORY.

ST. JOHN i, 14 :

*And we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

## VII.

### JESUS CHRIST MANIFESTING FORTH HIS GLORY.

THE beloved disciple joins with his own testimony that of his brother Apostles, that they had seen the glory of Christ their Lord. The Epiphany season is kept in commemoration of the manifestation of His glory. The great typical facts by which His glory was first seen or was more eminently displayed, are especially recalled to the remembrance of the Church. The wise men from the far East were led by a star to the place of His birth, the star being the instrument in the providence of God of making known to them, Him who was the Root and Offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star, and Who is also called "the Day Star from on high." This was the first Epiphany to the Gentiles. It was a manifestation, not to sight, but to faith. For it was nothing else but their faith that prompted them to follow the leading of the star to Jerusalem, and then to Bethlehem. Their faith must have been strong indeed, to have enabled them to see, in the luminous appearance, what is believed to have been really the Shekinah of God, and then to find in the Babe, with surroundings indicative of extreme poverty, and no outward tokens or evidences of royalty, the King of the

Jews and the Bestower of untold blessings upon the world.

It is a fact worth noting, that in our Lord's infancy He was manifested as a glorious Personage to the Jewish shepherds by the light from Heaven and the angelic songs, and to the Eastern sages by the brightness of a star ; and that He received alike from the lowly and the great the homage befitting the Divine Messiah, though in the midst of the tokens of humility and abasement.

Another manifestation of the glory of Christ was at the Temple, when He was twelve years old, as He sat in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, and silenced the reproachful solicitude of His parents by the answer : "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" His questions must have opened the eyes of the teachers of the law to the glorious revelation in the Law and the Prophets of the coming Messiah, which their technical criticisms upon the letter had concealed ; and the Virgin Mother must have gained new views of the glory of her Son, by His declaration of His relation to God as His Father, and the hint He gave of His office to be in His Father's House and about His Father's business.

Again, there was an Epiphany of His glory at His Baptism by John in the Jordan. The heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him in the form as of a dove, and the voice of the Father was



heard proclaiming Him His well-beloved Son. Here was afforded the thoughtful and believing, then and ever after, a glimpse of the fact and doctrine of three Persons in one God, and of Jesus as the Christ, and as participant in the nature of the Godhead. For the Son of God must be of the nature or substance of God, and the Spirit of God can neither be impersonal nor of a different nature.

Still another manifestation of Christ's glory, marked in the services of the Epiphany season, is that which He gave on the occasion of His first miracle. Sufficient wine for the purposes of the marriage festivities, as an occasion of joy and gladness, was made from water drawn from the six water-pots filled to the brim, after the manner of keeping water for purification. "This first miracle did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him." Thus miracles were a means for the showing forth of the glory of Christ and confirming the faith of His disciples; and hence the Gospels for the Sundays of the Epiphany season record examples of the three classes of miracles: Miracles upon nature, upon man, and upon the spirit world, suggesting the teaching they are intended to convey, and showing the glory of Christ in His power, His loving sympathy, His goodness and divine compassion.

Moreover, the parables of Christ are not forgotten by the Church in her Epiphany season, as a mode of teaching by which He manifested forth His glory; one of the

leading parables, that of the wheat and the tares, being introduced as the Gospel for one of the later Sundays. By speaking in parables, He gave to His disciples the knowledge of His Kingdom, and its future history and varying fortunes. Nature is a parable of spiritual things. Natural things should suggest those which are above nature. We should be "led through nature up to nature's God." Hence our Lord, by His parabolic teaching, quickened the spiritual perceptions of His followers, to see in the common things around them instructive analogies by which God was revealed, His heavenly Kingdom manifested, and His relations to man, as revealed in Christ, foreshadowed; and so His teachings by parables are an Epiphany, or showing forth of His glory.

Such are some of the distinctive teachings of the Epiphany, and the Sundays to which this glorious Festival gives the name.

To the Apostles was disclosed more of the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, than could be seen by any who had not the same opportunities of intimate intercourse and of special instruction. St. John was privileged beyond all others. His susceptible nature, his ardent faith, his affectionate disposition, his profound love, gave him an affinity to Jesus and an appreciation of His nature, character and doctrines, which to those of coarser mould had been impossible. Let us see to what extent we can behold with him the glory of the only begotten of the Father.

This glory of Christ is not merely outward. It must be something that is essential to Him. It shines forth from Him that it may reveal His inherent nature and character. Who, then, is this Person whose glory shines so resplendently in His acts and in His words? He is the WORD of God, who was already in the beginning, was with God and was God. The *Word* denotes the reason, the will, the speech, the power put forth or the putting forth of power. Hence all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. He stands in the eternal relation of the Son to the Father. Without Him, God in action, God creating, would be inconceivable. He is God of God, Light of Light, being of one substance with the Father, God in manifestation, Light enlightening, the substance or nature of God out-speaking, as the second Person of the one Godhead, giving existence and life to His creatures, revealing God to those endowed with capacities of faith, intelligence, moral perception, and spiritual intuition. Such was He from the beginning. But in the fulness of time the Word was made or became flesh and dwelt among us. The only begotten of the Father took into Himself human nature. He did not assume merely a human body, for body is the antithesis of soul. If it had been said, He assumed a body, it would have implied that He did not assume therewith the soul and spirit of man as well. The term is more general. It means more than body, nor is it inter-

changeable with it. It denotes the whole human nature, body, soul and spirit, in all its weak and necessitous condition, but filled, by His assuming it, with the rich treasures of His divine life. "The Word became flesh, in order to raise flesh to spirit." St. John states this in opposition particularly to the docetic Gnostics, who explained the corporeal existence of Christ as a mere appearance, thinking it unworthy of Him to take to Himself human flesh. He assumed it, however, uncorrupt and sinless, though with the general infirmities on which His susceptibility to sorrow as man depended.

To understand the doctrine of the Incarnation, we must carefully avoid the idea that He became *a man*. The Evangelist does not say this. His words cannot mean it. Had he said, He became a man, he would have represented the Redeemer as one among many. In truth He was Man, the Second Man, and the Lord from Heaven. He represented collective humanity. The first Adam was not one man among others. He was the original man, who included them all, who potentially carried in himself the whole race. So Christ was *the Man*, representing mankind. We were all in Him. As St. Augustine somewhere says, He included in Himself all His redeemed who should be united to Him by faith.

It follows that the human nature of Christ was *impersonal*. The Person was that of the Eternal Son of God. He did not assume a human person, but the human nature,

with its intelligence, its affections, its consciousness and will. He was the same person after as before. His divine nature was unchanged and unchangeable, not mixed or confounded with the human, distinct but indissolubly conjoined in the Divine personality, Who was from eternity.

Come up to the conception of this great doctrine, and most of the difficulties and apparent contradictions in what is said of Christ will disappear. As divine, He is omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, one with the Father, notwithstanding His humiliation. As human, He grew in wisdom and in stature. He could acquire knowledge and gain experience, be subject to temptation, and pray to His Father "Not My will, but Thine be done."\*

His name Jesus is His human name, His name as man having special reference to His human nature. His name Christ, is inclusive of both natures. It means the Messiah, Who is the God-Man, God incarnate. But when we speak of the Man Christ Jesus, we speak of the Person who is the Son of God. There can be in Him no other personality, in any other than the vague sense in which the collective personality of mankind could be spoken of, which is only personality by the rhetorical figure of personification. The Word was made flesh and dwelt

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\* Some, in discussing Mr. Gore's Essay in "*Lux Mundi*," have shown themselves to be Monophysites by detracting, in the interests of the Lord's Divine nature, from the perfectness or the verity of His human nature. It will not do to make His *human nature* non-natural nor divine.

among us. The human nature was, as it were, the tabernacle in which His divine nature was veiled from the light of men.

This true incarnation of the Son of God was to fulfill a ministry in behalf of men. To make such ministry effectual, God must become truly man. The great benefit intended for man was, to enable him to know God, to be again on terms of friendship with God, to offer to God an acceptable worship, to be happy in God's service, to be partaker of the divine nature. See, then, the stupendous plan by which the Son of God undertakes to minister to man, to be man's representative and the medium by which man might attain to the knowledge and fellowship of God. His ministry was of teaching and of priesthood, involving the sacrifice of His life for man's salvation.

It is in connection with His statement of the fact and purpose of the Incarnation, that St. John says, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." His glory was that which He had with the Father before the world was. It was a manifestation of the divine nature. It was the revelation of God. There are those in our days who affirm that God cannot be the object of knowledge; that because we cannot *comprehend* Him, we can in no sense *know* Him; that our knowledge concerning God is only relative, only approximate, only regulative of conduct, only to sense, and

instead of real knowledge ; that God is infinite and absolute, transcending knowledge, knowledge being only of the finite, of things conditioned in time and space : that God is therefore unknown and unknowable.

Of course we cannot claim to know God adequately. But if we cannot know Him really and truly, the Epiphany is meaningless, and the coming of Christ among us to reveal Him has failed of its purpose. "This is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent." It was the very purpose of the Incarnation to reveal God to man so that man might be brought back to God, saved from his sins, made holy, fitted for the enjoyment of God forever. Among the claims put forth by our Lord none was more prominent than that He came forth from the Father, that He did the works of the Father, that He was one with the Father, that whosoever had seen Him had seen the Father. Nothing can be more clear than that He aimed to show what was the mind of God, His love and wisdom, all His attributes by which His nature could be apprehended, His relations to man, His disposition in reference to the salvation of man and the bestowal upon him of His own nature. So the Apostles understood the work of Christ. In the revelation of the Word is disclosed the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. By the Holy Spirit, it was believed by them, that both the Father and the Son came to dwell in human hearts. The text refers to such a revelation of God, "We beheld His

glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." All the teaching and all the acts of Christ were intended to reveal, to the eye of faith, His glory, as the only begotten of the Father. His Epiphany was nothing to the purpose, if it was not this. His Apostles so regarded it, and they were sure that in Christ they were brought to the knowledge of God. It was not notions about Him that He would disclose to men. It was God Himself. Men's notions were erroneous. They needed more than anything else to be delivered from their inadequate and false notions concerning God. They thought that He was such an one as themselves. He came down from Heaven and assumed our nature, that He might not only redeem us from sin, which separated us from God and led us to degrade Him to our low conceptions, but also to make Him known to us as the personal object of allegiance, love and service. His glory as of the only begotten of the Father was seen by those whose faith qualified them to behold it, in all He taught and in all His works : in His Baptism, in His Transfiguration, in His glorious Resurrection and Ascension. The Creeds of His Church sum up the facts which witness to His revelation of the Godhead, and these facts cannot be otherwise explained. As we are baptized into the One Name or nature of Father, Son and Spirit, and brought into direct personal relations with each, so in the Creeds we profess our faith, fealty and service to the Father who made us,



the Son who redeemed us, and the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth us. We as persons are related to them as Persons. We trust them, hold intercourse with them, receive from them unspeakable blessings, which no gratitude can measure and no service repay. The Creeds do not give us, any more than does the Bible, doctrinal opinions and notions about God as a being of Whom we cannot know anything truly. They are the perpetual witness of the claim of the Church to know God and His only Son Jesus Christ, by the Spirit Who guides us into all truth. We can apprehend and know what we cannot grasp in thought, or fully comprehend. We may not know the infinite nor the absolute. These are philosophical notions, abstractions, of which we know only the meaning of the terms. But we can know Him who is infinite. We can know Him who is absolute. For did not the Son of God become flesh and dwell among us? Did He not, through His flesh and in His humiliation, manifest forth His glory? Did He not make known the moral attributes and the will of God? Was He not the medium through Whom men may become sons of God and heirs of eternal life? Was it not His teaching, and that of His Apostles, that we may "know Him now by faith, and after this life have the fruition of His glorious Godhead?"

Now, my dear brethren, have we beheld, with St. John, His glory? Have we seen His Epiphany? Do we know Him now by faith? Are we living in hope of the fruition

of His glorious Godhead, for which we are taught to pray ?

We may see His glory through these acts and words of His, which His Evangelists lovingly record. We may see Him by faith risen and ascended. With St. Stephen, we may behold Him standing, ready to assist all who call upon Him, at the right hand of God. We may see God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. We may see Him coming in His Kingdom. We may see Him going forth in His Church conquering and to conquer, treading down His enemies, giving victory to His Saints, and exalting them to share His triumph and glory.

But not excluding the manifold ways by which He manifests Himself to His people, in their private prayers and intercessions and study of and meditation upon His Word, in His gracious Providences, in the gifts of His Spirit and His continually abiding presence, doubtless we may especially behold His glory in His House. Of the old Temple it was said, "Out of Sion hath God appeared in perfect beauty." Still more is this true, now that type and prophecy have been fulfilled in Him ; now that the veil has been withdrawn and the substance before concealed has been disclosed ; now that God has become man to raise man to partake of the divine nature ; now that in Christ we are sons of God, and can render a service and worship which God can accept and make a means of the highest spiritual blessing and priceless gifts ;

now that He fulfills His promise of being present where His disciples are gathered together in His name; now that His Body and Blood, which are meat indeed and drink indeed, are given for spiritual nourishment, whereby He makes us one with Himself and gives us of that Life which is the earnest of the Resurrection and immortality. Surely, now, in such holy places as this, His Epiphany is to be especially seen and enjoyed. Hither you came to worship, to make known your requests, to join in the glad notes of praise and thanksgiving, to listen to His blessed will, to partake of His inestimable gifts, to have a foretaste of the joys in store for the faithful. Coming hither for such purposes, leaving the world outside, leaving worldly thoughts and cares behind, devoting the sacred hour to the honor of Him who here reveals Himself to the believing, surely your experience will warrant your saying with St. John, "and we have beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." So may it be to you more and more as you improve these glorious opportunities, and are thus prepared, through the worship you here render, for the heavenly sanctuary and the beatific vision.

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NOTE.—This sermon is published as containing instruction, now greatly needed, on two points: the knowability of God, and the Divine Personality of Jesus Christ. As to the point of God's knowability, any persons who have been greatly influenced by Sir William Hamilton's essay on the "Unconditioned," and Dean Mansell's "Limits of Religious Thought," should read Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," and other like Agnostic works, and see to what this philosophy of the unconditioned leads. Some of F. D. Maurice's works, as "What is

Revelation?" with the "Sequel" thereto, were a fairly good antidote. But read Dr. Kedney's "Christian Doctrine Harmonized," and Dr. Harris' "The Self-revelation of God." Read, if you can get hold of it, a very able proof of God's Being, by the present Bishop of Kansas.

On the second point: There is a prevalent hazy, indefinite way of speaking concerning the Person of the Son of Man, which cannot be considered as merely harmless because meaningless, but should be guarded against as involving material and serious error. It seems to belong to a humanistic theory of Christ, of which Keim in Germany is at present the great apostle. And Haweis and Abbott in England, and other like writers, have fallen into this way of teaching. Dr. Bruce justly speaks of the views of Dr. Haweis as "crude, undigested and nondescript." The looseness of view and speech of many who call themselves orthodox, might be described in like manner. It is to be lamented that some of our ablest and soundest teachers should have thoughtlessly adopted the vague mode of speaking concerning Christ's Person, characteristic of the humanistic school. To illustrate: In the second of the lectures of one of our most eminent divines on "The Historic Christ the Moral Power of Christianity," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., which are certainly able and worthy of wide circulation, such language as the following occurs:

"Those teachings of Jesus Christ concerning the character of God and the reality of another life, are an inseparable and integral part of His *Personality*. His *Personality* is inconceivable without them, and we are supposing that the *Personality of Jesus Christ, in the totality of its make-up*, has created, and still inspires that form of practical righteousness in our civilized life, than which, however faulty, no better has ever appeared: and that for nearly nineteen centuries it has energized history, producing revolutions and working out evolutions, like nothing else which history discloses. We are supposing all this to be true of Jesus Christ, and what we say is this: that if it be true, then the *Personality of Jesus Christ* is worthy our confidence, and that when He speaks, not with His lips merely, but with *His whole Personality*, concerning the character of God and the reality of another life, although these are things which lie beyond our range and are too high for us, yet as practical men seeking in the bewilderment of conflicting speculations for some practical guide that has been proved to be such by some practical experiment, we can do no better and wiser thing than set to our seal that Jesus Christ is true." Chapter II, pp. 48, 49.

Again:

"If our civilization be the creation of Jesus Christ, if it be the product of His *Personality*, and *this Personality necessarily include certain teaching* concerning the character of God and the reality of a future life," etc., etc.

Now, in the above extracts, try to define "Personality," "His whole Personality," "Personality in the totality of its make-up," and I apprehend you will experience some difficulty. Is it Christ's *human* Personality? But that means Nestorianism. Is there conceived to be a blending of the divine and human natures into one, so as to make one Personality in the sense of "Nature?" But that is Eutychianism, or Monophysitism. Or, is it considered that the Personality of Christ is human only? But that is the denial of the eternal generation and Sonship, the paternal and filial relations in the Godhead, the ground of all like relations, and of all society, among men. It is difficult to adopt any new terms in treating of themes involving Theology, without running unconsciously into error. The terms of the Creed enshrine the vital truths, and cannot be safely discarded. On this subject read very carefully Hooker's Book V, Secs. 51, 52, 53, 54, 55; Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," and Dr. A. B. Bruce on "The Humiliation of Christ." Read also Mason's "The Faith of the Gospel."

VIII.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

ST. JOHN viii, 12 :

*Jesus said unto them, I am the Light of the world.*

## VIII.

### CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

**I**T is a strange experience when one is called to rise before the dawn and go forth into the night. All around him is darkness. He gropes about, hardly knowing his way. Damp exhalations rise from the earth. A chill strikes through his limbs. A feeling of dread comes over him. If a little superstitious, he may see spectres rising in every obscure covert, or conjure them up in his fancies. But gradually the day dawns. Light is coming from the East. And by and by the golden sun is seen resting his broad disk on the horizon. It is not long before the whole heavens are in a blaze of glory. Ascending, in his course he pours upon the earth a full flood of illumination. The darkness has disappeared. The clouds have dispersed. The mists and fogs are scattered. A genial warmth is everywhere diffused. Nature teems with her myriad forms of life and beauty.

Learn thus what our Lord means when He says: I am the Light of the world. At the time of His advent, in a spiritual view, darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. The more intelligent were without religious faith. All the illiterate and many of the learned

were immersed in the depths of the grossest superstition. A long night of intellectual, and moral, and spiritual darkness was brooding over the world.\* But there were evident signs that the Day was dawning. There was light in the East. Wise men everywhere, without knowing why, were instinctively looking towards Palestine. Long before, had Zion been addressed by the great Evangelical Prophet with reference to this time: "Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee": "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising;" and more distinctly by the last of the Prophets: "The sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings." The night was far spent, the day was at hand. The star that guided the wise men and stood at last over Bethlehem, was the morning star, and heralded the rising Sun. He comes forth at length in His full splendor. The voice of God and the anointing of the Spirit proclaims Him as the Christ, and inaugurates His work. His beginning of miracles manifests His glory. He teaches with authority. He speaks as never man spake. Full of divine beneficence, He bears man's sicknesses and infirmities. He gives His life divinely, as the sacrifice for man's sins. Lifted up upon the Cross of Calvary, He draws all men unto Him.

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\* See the introductions to the Church Histories: Neander, Millman, etc. Also consult the Histories of Ancient Philosophy: Archer, Butler, Ueberweg, F. D. Maurice, etc.



self. Dying once for sin He ever liveth at God's right hand, to make effectual intercession for sinners. He is now and forever the King of glory. From the mid-heavens, He sheds forth His beams, enlightening, guiding, warming, life engendering. There is no place where His influence is not felt. The darkness is past. The true Light now shineth. There is no occasion of stumbling. We may walk honestly as in the day. The great aspiration of the ancient world, "Give us light," is more than realized. In Christ is the Light which is the Life of men.

Consider more particularly in what manner Christ is the Light of the world. Treating this vast subject with all possible brevity, we may still correctly apprehend the great truth in some of its implications which this title assumed by our Lord announces.

I. First, *it is from Jesus Christ that the modern world has derived its knowledge of God.* It was with the extremest difficulty that any among the ancients could rise to the apprehension of the Divine Unity. The Jews had been taught to conceive and tenaciously to hold it, by immediate revelation and a long course of Providential training and discipline; and though for more than eighteen centuries they have ceased to be the Church or in any special sense God's people—for it is the spiritual Israel to which pertain the promises—they have never lost their faith in the one God of their Fathers. They read it in their Scriptures. It is the revelation of the WORD which was

in the beginning. It was given by Him in whom they believed before His coming, but have ever since rejected. But elsewhere, before Christ's advent, if we may perhaps except the Persian (Bactrian) Zoroaster and his earliest followers (see Blunt's *Dictionary of Sects in Voc.*), and Socrates and Plato among the Greeks, and their disciples, though there is good evidence that the earliest form of religion among the Egyptians and other nations was monotheistic (see Renouf, Rawlinson, etc.), Polytheism was universal. There were as many gods as there were powers of Nature. The conception of unity in the Godhead was gradually attained by Philosophy, but it was a unity in which God and Nature were identified. The Personality of God was sacrificed. He was the first cause, the Soul of the world, or immutable law, or fate, or destiny. He was no longer a Person, caring for man, rewarding the good, punishing the evil. His universal Fatherhood, the filial relation, uniting all, even the lowest of His intelligent creatures, in closest fellowship with Deity, giving them claims upon Him, imparting the assurance of a Father's love: this was a conception unknown to the world, unattainable generally by Jews, even with the teachings of Revelation, and beyond the reach of the clearest intuition and deepest philosophic research of the great thinkers of Heathenism.

It is Christ who has taught us that God is one. The few who had apprehended it were never able to teach it.

So far as they held it, it was but a speculative opinion, and it was utterly beyond the common apprehension. Think of the ignorance, the barbarism, the gross idolatries of the nations when first known to history, which are now in the van of civilization. Who is there now in any of the great Christian countries who does not know that God is one? It is part of the common knowledge. The belief is universal. He that cometh to God must believe that He is. Jesus Christ has taught us this Faith. In all Christendom it is the earliest knowledge of infancy. The name of God is everywhere on the lips of childhood. The heart of every true, unsophisticated person instinctively accepts the truth. Polytheism is henceforth impossible.

And connected with the knowledge of the One God, is the belief in His personality. Christ has taught the world that God is personal. He is not Nature. He is not Law. He is above Nature. He is the Creator. It is His own laws He has imposed upon the matter which He formed. He is the Conserver, the Governor, the supreme disposer of all things, and all events. He thinks, feels, wills. He has eternal purposes which He brings about in time. His intelligence, wisdom, power, are personal, though infinite. His counsels are none the less real though unfathomable.

This doctrine of the Divine Personality is vital. If God is not a Person, He can hold to man no intelligent

relation. We cannot love Him. Prayer is an absurdity. He could neither hear nor answer. To be absorbed into His essence, to become divine in some vague sense which involves the loss of individuality, is the utmost to be hoped for after death. It is at best a dreary, desolate faith, towards which all philosophy which ignores the Divine Ideas revealed in the Gospel, is ever tending. History shows clearly enough that apart from Revelation the doctrine of One Personal God cannot long be held. Moham-medanism derived it from the Ancient Scriptures, but among the believers in Islam the name of God is but little else than the symbol of eternal Fate. Modern Philosophy, resting upon Christianity, is reaching the solution of many enigmas of nature and of man. But whenever it has rejected its proper basis, and in proud self-confidence disdained the Divine Teacher, it has uniformly relapsed into Pantheism or Atheism. The world depends upon Jesus Christ for its knowledge of God's Personality. The Church holds and proclaims it in her universal Creed. Outside her pale, there is no depth of error into which man's own thought may not and does not lead him.

Further than this, the world has learned of Jesus Christ that the One Personal God is a FATHER. This is exclusively a Christian idea. It was first taught effectively in the universal prayer: "Our Father who art in Heaven." It is amplified and set in a variety of lights in our Lord's teaching and in that of His Apostles. The world has

become so familiar with it, it seems so self-evident, that we scarcely think whence we derived it. Many of those who seek to divest Christ of His authority as a Divine Teacher, accept the idea of the Divine Fatherhood, as if in ignorance that it is from Him. This is a mode of unfairness of which unbelievers cannot well help being guilty. Where else but from Christ do they get their ideas of philanthropy, of regard for the poor and degraded, the captive, the enslaved, which they often hold in a distorted and strangely exaggerated manner, and make the foundation of schemes and systems by which they would displace Christianity, and the Church Christ's own established organ for the doing of good and for the reformation of men and of society?

What a boon to the world is this knowledge that God is our Father! What sweet thoughts of home, of parental care and affection, of filial respect, and love, and dependence, and of brotherly relationships, arise when we think of the great Father whose children we are! What gratitude we owe to Him who says of Himself so truly, I am the Light of the world.

Man's knowledge of God could not be complete till the Son of God had become man. We see in Him what God is like. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person. From His work for man we know the Father's love. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." We are

taught in Christ to conceive and know the moral attributes of God, His goodness, love, justice, holiness. No man can come to the Father but by the Son. No man can truly know God, but he to whom the Son reveals Him. Looking upon Christ, we see the Father. Out of Him we are in spiritual darkness. Thus we know God in Jesus Christ. As showing us the One God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is pre-eminently the Light of the world.

II. In the second place: It is *Christ who has taught us that we are sinners*. This fact was almost wholly ignored by Pagan moralists. A few like Plato felt that some fearful moral malady afflicted our world. But there was no adequate idea among the purest and best thinkers before Christ, of sin as sin, of the moral government of God, of the holiness, justice, goodness of His law, of which sin is the transgression, of the necessity of penalty, of the punishment that necessarily follows the state of heart or the outward life which is in contravention of eternal right. Most forms of sin among the ancients were in one way or another deified and worshipped. The facts of history amply justify St. Paul's estimate of the moral condition of the heathen world, in his first chapter to the Romans. Almost every vice was shamelessly practised. There was no law to terrify. Religion imposed no obstacle. Religion and morality had little connection. Even the temples of the gods were dens of pollution.

No doubt there were grand moralists. There were men who conceived a noble ideal of virtue ; but there were few who exemplified it in practice. There was no power of obedience, no high, constraining impulse to duty. The law in the members was too powerful against the law of the mind. The good was perceived, but the evil was practised. The oft quoted passage, "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*," reminds one of St. Paul's seventh chapter to the Romans. The great ethical thinkers did not reach the point of asking, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Only men in Christ could thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for deliverance. Man has ever struggled in vain in his own way and strength for victory over sin and evil.

Jesus Christ is the moral teacher of man. There are some who contend that there has not been and cannot be any increase of ethical knowledge.\* But they must perforce make an exception in favor of the great Teacher. He did certainly give us moral truths which were unknown before and undiscoverable without Him. He revealed to man himself, showed him the nature of the disease of sin against whose power he had been helpless. He taught for the first time that sin comes from within, that its centre is the heart ; that what comes from the heart, rather than any influence from without, defiles him ;

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\* Buckle's views on this point have long been discarded and are quite generally forgotten, as they deserve to be.

that every evil thought, desire, or impulse, or feeling, is sin; that all impurity is sin of the greatest culpability. So of envy, hatred, malice, uncharitableness. It is not the outward act alone that is sinful. Lust may be adultery. Hatred may be murder. Therefore in the heart must begin the eradication of sin. There is no personal reformation that is not radical. The regulation of vice will not repress it. Old desires, appetites, propensities must be repressed, mortified. New principles must be implanted. This is all well known. But how have we come to know it? How have we come to know the sinfulness of pride, worldly ambition, covetousness? How have we come by the knowledge of the superior excellence of the passive virtues: patience, meekness, humility, resignation? We have learned these things as Christians, not otherwise. Christ has been our Teacher.

We learn also from Christ that all sin is against God, that it is abhorrent to His Nature, that it is condemned by His every attribute. We see this not only by the way in which Christ looked upon sin, in Whom the feelings of the Father are manifested. We see it especially in the death He endured for sin on Calvary. It was sin that brought Jesus Christ to the cross. He Who knew no sin came down into the lot of sinners. As representative and surety for man, He is treated as if He were the sinner, and gives His life as the sacrifice for sin. It is the great propitiation, and makes atonement, effects the



reconciliation, so that God can be just and justify the ungodly, so that all in Him may return to the Divine Communion and fellowship, so that man's highest ultimate blessedness may be the enjoyment of God in the beatific vision of His glory. It is the Cross that shows the enormity of sin in the view of God. It is in view of the Cross that man learns to hate it. It is the power that comes from the Cross in which alone man can overcome it. It is the teaching of the Cross that has given to the world life and light. From the Cross proceeds the illumination which warms and vivifies. In the Cross is the source of purity and of sanctification.

III. This brings us to our third point, that *Christ is the Light of the world, as He has opened to man and given him the knowledge of the way of Redemption*. It is impossible to find a single redemptive power in the world apart from Christ and the Gospel. It is not in learning. It is not of the nature of knowledge to purify the heart or to reform the character. The chief corrupters of society, the great knaves and robbers, the devastators of mankind, the distinguished authors of calamity and woe, have seldom been wanting in learning or intelligence. There are modern crimes for which sharp intellects are requisite. It is not in Philosophy. Much as the world has been indebted to its great philosophical thinkers for their searching analyses of human faculties, and for their discovery of Nature's secrets, they never revealed

the nature and origin of the sin that is in us, or prescribed any practicable method of overcoming it. With all the light Philosophy, apart from Christianity, could lend us, we should still have been groping in the darkness which had pervaded the world, and wickedness and vice would have had no effectual antidote.

Nor was there any religion that could effect a redemption. The gods of Paganism showed no remedy. Sacrifice was powerless. The blood of bulls and goats did not take away sin nor purge the conscience. Even human sacrifices, once nearly if not quite universal,\* could not satisfy the sense of the displeasure of Heaven nor open the way of deliverance from sin. Holiness of heart had never been a distinct conception. It could not be the aim of life, and was therefore utterly beyond attainment.

Christ is the Redeemer, the Destroyer of sin, the Reconciler of man with God. How many a man, burdened with sin, clinging to the Cross, pleading Christ's merits, renouncing his own, has felt his burden fall, and has risen in freedom with a new heart to a life of duty. What multitudes have proved that the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. There have been none so bad, so sin-polluted, that resting their hopes upon Christ and Him crucified, have not become in Him new creatures. This is not fancy, but fact. Experience is as

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\* See Magee on "The Atonement," Note V.

trustworthy in verifying facts in the moral and spiritual as in the physical world. Look through history. What is it that has been the instrument of human regeneration? Is it not faith in the Incarnate, and suffering, and risen Saviour? Whence the power by which the Church has conquered? Is it not faith in the crucified and risen Jesus? Even the teaching of Christ, with all its authoritative truth and its adaptability to human needs, had been powerless without the Cross of the divine Sufferer. It is the great fact of God incarnate suffering for our sins, that has in all ages touched the heart, kindled the better feelings and sympathies, regenerated the nature, opened the way for the entrance into the soul of the germinating seeds of the words of the Lord Jesus. It is then, and only then, that His example becomes effective; and that, looking into the mirror of His Holy Life, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. The central facts and doctrines of Christianity are Christ, God-man, crucified and risen, and now interceding for us. Here is the source of its power. Defraud us of the Cross and we have no Christianity. By this we may overcome the world. By this sign we conquer.

See, then, the glory streaming from the Cross by which Christ is the Light of the world. By the power of the Cross He is the world's Redeemer. Let us walk in His light. It will lead us to eternal day.



IX.

JESUS CHRIST THE FOUNDER OF CHRIS-  
TIANITY.

ST. MARK i, 1 :

*The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the  
Son of God.*

## IX.

### JESUS CHRIST THE FOUNDER OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT is impossible to consider Christianity apart from its Founder any more than from its history, and the great society which embodies it.\* The first verse of St. Mark's Gospel gives us a definition of Christianity, as being the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus Himself calls it "the Gospel of the Kingdom." His purpose in giving it was to organize it into a community, through which its blessings might be diffused and perpetuated. Christianity is the good news of One claiming to be the Saviour from sin, the Healer of men's souls and bodies, the Source of life Spiritual, the Medium of communion with God, the Bringer to light of Immortality, and the Founder of a Divine Society which was to proclaim Him to the world in all His beneficent offices.

The truth of the Christian System depends upon the truth of its Founder's claims. Was He what He asserted of Himself, and what His Church has ever regarded Him?

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\*This discourse would more naturally follow the IVth. But the arrangement of the series in a course for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany made it more convenient to place it here.

If He was what He claimed to be, the truth of His religion cannot be disputed.\*

Let us, then, consider the character of Jesus Christ as the proof of the truth of Christianity.

There can be no question that the view of Jesus Christ, set forth in the Catholic Creeds and professed in all ages by the Church of God, is just that view which expresses the meaning of His own teaching concerning Himself in the four Gospels. There can be no doubt whatever that the Jesus Christ of the Gospels and of the New Testament, claimed to be the Son of God, God from God, one in nature with God the Father; and also, that He was true man, was in man's nature, with all man's powers and faculties, and subject to all man's passions and infirmities, sin only excepted.† Multitudes of passages might be quoted from the books of the New Testament to substantiate this view of Christ. But the best possible evidence that this is the view presented in these books, is the fact that the Church has ever found this view in the books and has held it from the beginning. It is precisely this character, the central figure of the Gospels, Whom the Church has ever held to be her Founder and Head, and Who has been unquestionably the Source of all her noblest teaching and of the best and holiest aspirations and

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\* Read the Bishop of Carlisle's "The Foundations of the Creed."

† The best work on our Lord's Temptation is the sermons on that subject by the late Dr. Mill of Cambridge (England).



endeavors of the Christian world. Had Jesus claimed to be, and so been regarded by His followers, as only a man, however great and exalted, that marvellous power would have been wanting which His Church has ever possessed in her divine ideal of all human excellence, and of God's infinite love and mercy manifested in His Person. The higher the ideal, the higher the attainment. Was Jesus of Nazareth what He claimed to be? This is the great question. I shall present some of the reasons which seem to substantiate this claim.

I ask you to observe, first, that there is no way of accounting for the fact of Jesus Christ, asserted in the Gospels and believed in by the Church, except on the assumption of its truth.\* We have unquestionably in the New

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\*The works on this subject that seem to me most worthy of study are Dr. John Young's "The Christ of History," and Row's "The Jesus of the Evangelists." Ullmann's "The Sinlessness of Jesus" is still very valuable, but Ullmann accepts the view of our Lord's human nature expressed in the *posse non peccare*, "able not to sin." The true view is, *non posse peccare*, because of the hypostatic union. Being God-man, that he could sin is impossible, and indeed inconceivable without weakening the union of the two natures in the Lord's Person. The *posse non peccare* hypothesis tends to Nestorianism.

In contradiction of the above, the "Church Times" of March 6 has the following note in answers to correspondents:

"The blending together of the *possibility* of falling and the *necessity* of being victorious over evil is a mystery, involved in the very idea of the God-man (see Dr. Mill's Sermon on our Lord's Peccability). The idea of the Redeemer compels us to admit, along with it, the possibility of his falling, exactly parallel with Adam's possibility of *not* falling, because without this possibility merit is inconceivable. Moreover, all the consolation poor wretched man, striving with sin, derives from the thought that his Redeemer Himself endured the bitterness of temptation, would be annihilated, if the *objective* possibility of falling were denied in Christ. But this possibility can only be understood as *purely objective*; though the humanity of Christ truly suffered temptation in its direct forms, yet so far as in the Person of Christ *God* became Man, so far we must ascribe to Him the *non posse peccare*, or impeccability." (See Hooker V. 53.)

When we are thinking of our Lord's human soul without regard to His Per-

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Testament this Person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man. This Person did give origin to the Church early in the first century. I need not enter into the questions as to when the several books of the New Testament were written, nor concerning their inspiration and authority. As a matter of fact, established by the most searching hostile criticism, the four most important letters

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son, we can of course conceive the possibility of His falling, but not otherwise. The reality of His temptation depends, as Dr. Mill conclusively shows, upon the completeness or perfection of His human nature. It does *not* depend on such possibility of His falling as was the possibility of Adam's not falling. No such parallel between Christ and Adam exists, and there was no such condition of the possibility of merit in our Blessed Lord, or of consolation to His people in their temptations. The idea is preposterous. I venture to say in opposition to the inference from the "Church Times" note above, that Dr. Mill did not believe in our Lord's peccability in any sense. I have three volumes of his sermons, in which there is none with any such title nor on any such subject. There may be in some other volume, but I have his five sermons on our Lord's Temptation in the wilderness, in which he proves the reality of the temptation as being compatible with its being impossible for Him to sin. There is no hint in these sermons of any possibility of His sinning as a conceivable hypothesis necessary to His Temptation's being real.

As to the reference to Hooker V. 53, it will be seen on examination that there is in that and the other Sections of that wonderful exposition of the doctrine of the Incarnation, nothing whatever bearing directly on this subject.

Read Dr. Kedney's Chapter XXIV, on "The Temptation of Jesus Christ" in "Christian Doctrine Harmonized," p. 249. He says:

"Unless it (the mind not to sin) have passed beyond the possibility of such defection, it cannot be said to be subjectively sinless. In the case of Jesus Christ, there is not in His whole career any the slightest evidence that the mind to do the will of the Father was ever in peril or trembled in the balance."

This is a true inference, even momentarily considering the Lord only as man. But see an authority at which the "Church Times" itself must bow. Bishop Forbes of Brechin, in his Exposition of the Nicene Creed, p. 190, says as follows:

"He was totally free from all sin whatsoever; as St. Peter says, 'Who did no sin.' Indeed, His human soul was impeccable: 1, because, from the beginning of its existence that human soul enjoyed the beatific sight of God, which dispels all the deceptions of sin, and takes away the power of committing it; and 2, on account of its hypostatic union with the Person of the Word, in which case, if the soul of Christ had sinned, the Person of the Word would have communicated with sin."

ascribed to St. Paul were written by him before the year 70. The Gospel bearing the name of St. John, and the three synoptic Gospels, and the other books of the New Testament, were well known and often quoted as of authority before the middle of the second century. All this is admitted by the most learned of the enemies of Christianity, who write with any pretense of candor and impartiality. The evidence is unimpeachable which sufficiently proves that the whole New Testament belongs to the first century, and that every book is both genuine and authentic, though two or three of the minor books were for a time disputed.\* But though this were not true, though some of the books were of later origin and not by Apostles or actual contemporaries of Christ, it would make no material difference to the argument here proposed. For it is undisputed that all the while from the year 33 (or rather 29, more probably the date of the day of Pentecost) the Church existed, was gaining multitudes of disciples and baptizing them, keeping them true to the Apostles' doctrine and their Fellowship, to the Public Worship, and the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood. The Church, in its Profession of Faith, required of all, claimed as its Founder Jesus Christ, the

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\* The best book to have and to read on this subject is Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*. Read also Dr. Sandy's "Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel," Bishop Westcott on "The Canon" and "The Bible in the Church," also Dr. Watkins' recent Bampton lectures.

Son of God, crucified and risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven, and sending His Spirit. In such claim was her wonderful life and power in determining and moulding character. This fact is beyond dispute. From the first notices of Christianity we find in history, in St. Paul's undisputed writings, the Epistles to the Corinthians, the Romans and the Galatians, written less than thirty years after Christ's death by public Crucifixion, in the other New Testament books, in the Apostolic Fathers near the beginning of the second century, and from seventy to one hundred years after the beginning of this mighty movement, which was destined to overturn the old civilization; in the heathen testimonies of the same period, which are in entire agreement with the Christian books, especially the letter of Pliny the Younger, which proves that the Christians in the beginning of the second century believed in and worshipped Christ as God: from all these sources of information it is evident that the Church held her Founder to be what all the sacred writers represent Him. So that whatever be the character of the books, whether inspired or not, and however composed, though the latest conceivable date be assigned to them, there is found in these and contemporary writings, Christian and heathen, good and sufficient evidence that the Christ of the Church and the Christ of the Gospels and the Catholic Creeds is one and the same Divine Person. He it was by Whom and for

Whom the Church existed, and He it is to Whom, with all Christians before us, we swear our fealty, and Whom we humbly adore. There is no historical fact better attested than that from before the middle of the first century, when they were converted and baptized to whom St. Paul wrote his undisputed letters, this great central character of the Gospels and of the Church has ever held the same place in the love, devotion and adoration of Christians.

Now, what is the origin of the character of Christ, as from the first it was conceived and held to be, and how could it have come to exist? For my own part, I do not see any possible way to account for the fact of Jesus Christ except on the basis of His truth and reality. How could such a character have been invented? I confidently assert that this would have been beyond the power of human achievement. The fact that He was believed in, proves that He was. There have been, indeed, fabulous characters. Fiction has given us many striking personalities that never existed. But Jesus Christ cannot be explained as a product of myths or of imagination. The fact of the Christian Church is of itself the sufficient proof of the fact of Jesus Christ. For how did the Church come to exist? He must have been what He claimed to be, or there is no possible way of accounting for its origin. Its existence is inexplicable. St. Paul's argument, in one of his undisputed Epistles, from the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, that He was thus declared to be the

Son of God with power, has in the Apostles' times and ever since carried irresistible conviction to the best and strongest minds. The Church was built up on the preaching of Jesus and the Resurrection. So great and beneficent an institution as the Christian society, with its laws, worship and Sacraments, dating, as everybody knows, from the time of the Apostles, is accounted for, if the facts concerning Jesus Christ set forth in the Creed are true, and cannot be accounted for otherwise. The power of the Holy Ghost attended upon the Apostolic preaching, and avouched for its truth by its marvellous results. Christ's promise to send His Spirit was fulfilled in the fruits of the Spirit's working, as recorded in authentic history; and the work of the Spirit empowering the Apostles, is an unimpeachable witness to the Resurrection of Christ and thus of His divinity. The Church could not but follow, if these things were true. If they were not, no such society would have been possible.\*

But not to dwell on or to press this argument, which has never been and never can be answered, I come back to the Divine portraiture of the four Gospels. Whence was it? Was the character formed gradually in the enthusiastic imaginations of the followers of Jesus, who knew Him to be and at first admired Him as only a great

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\* Leslie's argument in his "Short Method with the Deists," in its application to the founding of the Church, is still unanswerable. And see also Maclear's "The Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist."

and good man? This has been a popular theory, and has with non-Christians a certain plausibility. It supposes that the Disciples of Jesus, after His death, came to exaggerate His character, His teaching and His acts ; that the story of His Resurrection was an invention of sincere but deluded enthusiasts ; that the miracles ascribed to Him were such as, being the Messiah, He ought to have performed. And so, little by little, the character took form and shape, and the great and good Reformer was magnified into the Son of God, the incarnate Saviour. The advocates of this theory suppose that the process was completed in about one hundred years, or towards the middle of the second century. Not till about that time had the character of Jesus been fully evolved out of the consciousness of His Disciples. They who assert that man is sprung from an ascidian, a low type of animal life, require millions of years for his development. But here a thing far more difficult, the development of the person and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from the humble carpenter, the son of Joseph, is accomplished in a single century ! No wonder that the theory is already abandoned by some of the ablest men in the school which invented it.

You will observe that the time of Christ and His Apostles is the middle point in history, the place a centre of light and knowledge. It was an age of literature, of historic records, and no dark period of ignorance, when myths



could be formed imperceptibly.\* The time is altogether too short, even had the condition of the world been like that of the early days of Greece or of Rome, when there was no authentic history of events. Had there been many centuries instead of but one, for the process of this evolution, the formation of the Christ of the Gospels and of the Creeds of the Church out of a mere man of the artisan class, would have been clearly impossible in that age of the world and in the Roman Empire.

But one hundred years cannot be allowed.† The four Epistles of St. Paul, which are admitted by the most destructive critics, present precisely the same character. Less than thirty years after His death He was held and proclaimed as having risen from the dead, as the Son of God incarnate in our nature, as the Saviour of the world. And unquestionably St. Paul had the same view of Christ and preached the same facts and doctrines from the time of his conversion, fifteen or twenty years earlier. It is, without variation, the same character, and with the same teaching and miracles. In these, St. Paul's principal Epistles, we find everything that is essential in Christianity. If these were all we had of the New Testament, the character of Christ and the doctrines of the Church

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\* See Dr. Mill on the mythical theory of the origin of the Gospels.

† See Bishop Lightfoot's essays on the book "Supernatural Religion," as trenchant and decisive a work as Dr. Bentley's on "Freethinking," in the last century.



would be the same as they have ever been and are to-day. So that this wonderful evolution must have fully completed itself while multitudes of people who had seen Christ in the flesh and witnessed His crucifixion, were still living and not yet much beyond middle life. But the synoptical Gospels really date from about the same time as these Epistles. The proofs that they are genuine and authentic is far greater than that for the most unquestioned of our classical authors. St. John's Gospel has been for the past half century the battle-field of criticism, but the evidence has come forth clearer than ever in consequence of its impugnors, that this most loving, appreciative and profoundest of the Gospels, is the work of the Disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Supper. So it has been, also, as to all the principal writings of the New Testament Canon. So that, by pure historic criticism, this development theory of the origin of Christ and of Christianity has been fairly driven from the field.\*

But consider, again, what this invention theory involves. All men admit that the character of Jesus is perfect. It is, throughout, consistent. We gather what it is from many particulars. Many acts, and sayings, and discourses help to give us the conception. There is no character in history of such perfect unity, such marked individuality, such complete consistency, such uniqueness, and separate-

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\* See the works above referred to.

ness from the common order of men. His teaching and its peculiar authority, His miracles, His assumed Lordship over men and nature, and over the laws and customs of Judaism, His severity of rebuke to hypocrites, His gentleness to the weak, His sympathy with suffering, His loving attachments, His self-abnegation and sacrifice, His perfect resignation and patience in suffering wrong, His seven words from the Cross, the awful, unapproachable sublimity of His death, all belong to one Person, and could belong to none other. Could this person have been invented or developed out of any material then existing? We must say, No. The idea is preposterous.

The theory involves many minds comparing their recollections and the legends that were forming, and each adding a stroke, one after another, till the picture should be complete. Think of a great painting, The Marriage of Cana, the Last Judgment. Think of such a painting as gradually formed by many artists one after another, each adding some touch that should express his own idea! How could you conceive a greater absurdity? Jesus Christ is Himself and none other. His character is unique and alone.

There is another insuperable difficulty in this theory. There were no elements in existence out of which the character of Jesus could have been developed. Evolution involves involution. Nothing can be evolved except from what exists in the germ. On the mythical theory, the

character would have been formed from the best ideas of the Jews of the time, and by an attempted improvement upon their best models. The Messiah thus formed could have been none other than a Jew. He could not have transcended the highest and best conceptions of his race and time. He could have been nothing other than a great Shammai or Gamaliel. The best examples of goodness and of greatness always show their nationality and their age. Homer and Plato were Greeks. Dante was an Italian of the 13th and 14th centuries. Shakespeare was an Englishman of the Elizabethan æra; Milton of the time of the Commonwealth. How different with Jesus! He was not a Jew in character. He represents universal man. He belongs not to the age in which He lived. He sums up in Himself all that belongs to humanity.

It is true that He was looked forward to by a long line of Hebrew Prophets, and that in the Jewish nation by special training, and in Heathenism by Providence, there was a preparation extending through the long ages for His advent. But the Prophets did not furnish the materials from which His character, if not real, could have been formed. It was not possible to understand how the prophecies were to be fulfilled until He came and fulfilled them. He is, indeed, Himself the fulfilment of the recorded prophecies, and history, and ritual worship of His nation. He fully explains and justifies them. But He was not in fact the Messiah the Scribes and stu-

dents of the sacred writings were looking for. He disappointed all their expectations. It was because He did not answer to their ideas of what the Messiah was to be that He was rejected. But yet it is evident that He fulfilled the Scriptures, and thus stamped both the prophecies and the history as divine.\*

He came at what proved to be, and was to be, if He were the Messiah, the end of the Jewish economy. His coming determined a new æra, the beginning of a new historic development, and the date of all subsequent events. To fill this place, to do what He did, to be what He became to His Church, to history, to civilization, to humanity, He could have been no less than He claimed to be, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, as the universal Creeds proclaim Him.

There are three great historical religions to-day besides Christianity and its forerunner, Judaism. The Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek and Roman religions, and the Persian, except as represented in its degeneracy among the Parsees, have passed away. They began in the pre-historic ages, and have no practical interest to us. Brahminism is also in its origin pre-historic, and still sways the faith of mill-

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\* It is a great mistake to ignore the older works on the prophecies, such as Hurd's, Davison's and Lyall's. But Dr. Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy" is decidedly good. Compare Prof. Toy's learned attempt to "evolve" the Socinian Christ from pre-existent materials,—"*Judaism and Christianity*."

ions, but its best elements are said to have been absorbed into Buddhism. The historic religions which still exist, each with a numerous following, are Confucianism, Buddhism and Mohammedanism. The last is a sort of Judæo-Christian heresy, based upon the recognition of the Jewish Scriptures, of Moses and of Christ, to whom it gave pre-eminence. Its founder claimed no prophet heralding his advent, nor did he work or claim to work miracles in attestation of his teaching. He was doubtless a great enthusiast and a man of genius. But it was never pretended by himself or his followers that he was anything more than a reformer and the Prophet of God.

Confucius lived some 500 years before Christ. He was simply a great utilitarian philosopher, or rather moralist. His religion, if it can be so called, is one merely of prudential maxims, the great principle of which is to avoid extremes. He did not pretend to anything divine in his system. He taught nothing about God or a future life. It is doubtful whether he believed in either. In everything he was a thorough-going Chinaman. He built up his system out of pre-existing materials. It was what his people wanted and they accepted it.

Buddhism is far more interesting. Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" has popularized it by disguising its real features and giving it a Christian form.\* Its founder was

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\* By all means read Dr. Kellogg's "The Light of the World." Monier Williams' recent work on this subject should be read, if accessible. Many, if not

a real historical person, though the materials for the study of his life are for the most part but recently accessible, and are still largely mixed with fable. He appears to have been a great and good man, of kingly birth, an extreme ascetic, of great earnestness, perseverance and self-denial in the pursuit of truth. He lived about 400 years before Christ. He founded his system in a profound reaction from Brahminism. So far as it can be called a religion, it is a religion of despair. It is for the disappointed, for those without hope. It has no God, or none who can be known. Its goal is *Nirvâna*, or nothingness, the everlasting sleep and rest of unconsciousness, or absorption into the all of being. It is only for indolent dreamers who had rather not be than to be. It has no spring of action. The civilization formed by it is non-progressive. Had the Anglo-Saxons been Buddhists they would never have been known to history. Buddha came to be claimed, long after his death, to be one of the Avatars or Indian incarnations of deity. And yet, like Confucianism, Buddhism is without a spiritual side. It has no personal God, as caring for man, and as the Answerer of prayer. Powerful as has been its influence, it scarcely answers to our ideas of a religion. Doubtless it may have

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most of the works referred to in this volume, are to be found in the Matthews Hall Library, in the Denver Public Library, or in that of the Chamber of Commerce.

done great good. But for ages it has been in its degeneracy and mingled with the grossest superstitions.

All religions have good in them. Men will have some religion. A poor one well followed is better than none at all. But some one must be divine, or man's nature is a lie. Which is Divine? By the side of these old religions, grand as they were in many respects, Christianity stands out as the Divine in the presence of the human.

There is nothing in them to invalidate, there is much in them to confirm, mostly by contrast, the divine claims and character of Jesus Christ. You know what He taught. You know that His Gospel is good news to men, of whatever race, or nation, or condition, or class in life. You know that His Church is the greatest agency known to history in man's real advancement. If you accept Him as your teacher you shall be taught of God. If you see Him truly with the eye of faith, you shall see in Him the Father. If you take up the Cross He lays upon you, and follow Him in the true Spirit of Discipleship, with love, obedience and adoration, you shall find the evidence of His divinity within you. You shall find God in Him. You shall find your place and work as God's child. You shall realize that in Him every man is your brother. You shall have a hope, buoyant and inspiring, of immortal blessedness that maketh not ashamed, because it cannot disappoint you.





X.

JESUS CHRIST ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM.

ST. MATTHEW iv, 17:

*From that time Jesus began to preach and to say:  
Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

## X.

### JESUS CHRIST ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM.

THE fact that Jesus began His Ministry with the great message of the Baptist is very suggestive. He came to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. St. Matthew is recording in his fourth chapter, as St. John does in the latter part of his first chapter, our Lord's first beginning of the actual founding of His Kingdom.

Observe, first, that in founding a kingdom He was fulfilling the ancient prophecies. David and Solomon, as all agree, were eminent types of the Christ; and it is in their regal character that this is especially true of them. The probable reason of the divine permission that Israel should have a King, and the theocracy be developed into a monarchy, was in order that the history of the Jews might foreshadow and typify the Kingdom of the Messiah. The Prophets are full of the idea of a King who should sit on the throne of David, who should rule in righteousness, and of whose Kingdom there should be no end. The Psalmist and the Prophet often speak of the King Messiah in terms which can be referred to none others. Even when the immediate reference is to a King whose reign is close at hand, terms of description are introduced

which are not applicable to a temporal King, which are too broad in their scope and profound in their spiritual import, to be capable of fulfilment in any other than a Divine King, the glories of Whose reign, in its ultimate results, could be but faintly typified by the fleeting splendors of earthly rule, as represented by the greatest of the Kings of Judah.

It was common in the last century to take these prophecies as examples of a double sense ; a reference both to an immediate and a more remote object. The "double sense" is now quite generally discredited, and in the person or fact in the Prophet's mind is to be found a type of that which was to be realized more gloriously, on a far grander scale and in a higher sphere, in the distant future.\*

In type and in prophecy Jesus Christ is foretold as a King with such clear distinctness, as to carry the undoubted implication that the Kingdom of Christ was to be the leading characteristic of His dispensation. Thus Daniel proclaims that "in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever" (ii, 44 ; vii, 14, 27).

John the Baptist was the last and greatest of the

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\* See Fairbairn on "Prophecy," a book well worth reading, as also is his "Typology of Scripture," and Davison on "Prophecy," previously referred to.

Prophets, and accordingly he takes up in his preaching the prominent theme of all the great Prophets who preceded him, of the Kingdom of the Christ, and makes it the great motive of his exhortation. For "he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The object of his preaching was to prepare the way for that kingdom, to bring those among whom he could gain a hearing to a moral and spiritual fitness to become its loyal subjects. He saw that to this end there was needed a great reformation in heart and in life. Hence his baptism for the remission of sins. Hence his demand for repentance and the fruits meet for repentance. He came in the stern, severe aspect of an ancient Prophet of righteousness, in the spirit and power of Elias, laying the axe to the root of the trees, and in the name of eternal justice requiring of every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, that it should be cut down as cumbering the ground and cast into the fire. So was the way of the Lord to be prepared. Some were thus predisposed to welcome the King coming in His Kingdom. The fact that the Christ was to be a King and to have a kingdom was generally accepted, though the nature of that kingdom was generally mistaken.

The Baptist gave no false nor exaggerated idea of the Kingdom of Christ. He did not and could not define it. His understanding of its nature was doubtless imperfect.

Especially was he unable to see the infinite love and mercy that should characterize it, at least until the Lord had shown the beneficence of His healing powers in curing many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, giving sight to the blind, and preaching the Gospel to the poor (St. Luke vii, 21, 22). The King in His Kingdom must be supreme in His power of doing good to the bodies as well as the souls of men. Before the fact, it was impossible to know all this. He was right in the prominence he gave to the idea of the kingdom, and in all his teaching concerning it so far as it went, though he could not apprehend its full character, its constitution and polity and the details of its administration. He did little more than to bring out distinctly and practically enforce the substance of all the prophetic teaching of the past concerning Messiah's Kingdom, and it is the sufficient proof of the divine inspiration that guided his utterances, and the correctness of his conclusions, on this all-important subject, that the Lord Himself began His work by reiterating the exhortation, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and also that He commissioned His Apostles to bear the same testimony (St. Matt. x).

But unlike the Baptist, the Lord did not confine Himself to preaching the Kingdom as near. He began at once to set up the Kingdom. He began to lay its permanent foundations. The Gospel He announced was "the Gospel of the Kingdom." It is the Kingdom of

Heaven which forms directly or indirectly the great subject of all His teaching and His acts (St. Mark i, 14).

In this fourth chapter of St. Matthew, which records our Lord's first works after His baptism and His triumphant contest with Satan in the wilderness, we find Him not merely instilling the principles of His doctrine into the minds and hearts of men; His mode of procedure is far otherwise. His teaching is more than in word. It is in deed or action. He begins to call disciples. He calls first those whom He would make officers in the administration of the visible government He would establish among men. He calls Andrew and Simon. Then He calls James and John, the sons of Zebedee. So profoundly does He impress them with His regal authority and right to command that they leave at once their accustomed secular avocations and they follow Him, and give Him their entire allegiance. The narrative goes on to tell us that "Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases among the people."

Here, as when He taught in the synagogue of Capernaum (St. Luke iv, 18), and gave His triumphant answer to John's messengers (St. Luke vii, 21, 22), is a divine and authoritative statement of what the Gospel is. It is not the Gospel of a scheme of opinions, or doctrinal views, or abstract theories. It is not the Gospel of a so-called "plan

of salvation." It is not the Gospel of the atonement, justification by faith only, or of conversion and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, though these things be all involved in it and necessary in its reception. It is primarily the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel which calls man into allegiance to a King; which has subjects and laws, and government, and officers of administration; which holds sway and exercises authority over persons, and guarantees them privileges, and confers grace and salvation. The very ground of it, its root idea, is that it is a Kingdom of Heaven among men, the antetype of that of David and his successors, spiritual and not secular, conferring spiritual blessings, a Kingdom visible, universal and unending. It requires an intellectual assent to the facts and principles of what we call the Christian religion, though it is never so called in the New Testament. But first of all, and as of the chiefest importance, it demands faith, fealty, allegiance to a PERSON, the King and Lord of all things, the Prince of Peace, the Head of the Church, the Saviour of the world.

With this view of the work of Christ you find it all consistent and harmonious. He is the eternal Son of God Incarnate in our nature. The fact of the Son of God born into our world, for the purposes for which He came, is the Gospel, the good news which the angels announced to the shepherds. The Gospel is the personal King and Saviour, making His advent and fulfilling His work.



“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” It is never a series of abstractions proposed to the understanding. The Gospel accepted always means the subjection of the heart and will to the King of kings and Lord of lords. In other words, the Gospel of Christ is Christ Himself, doing what He did, teaching what He taught, suffering what He suffered, crucified, dying, rising from the dead, ascending into Heaven, coming by the power of His Spirit in His Kingdom. Thus the Apostles’ Creed sets forth the Gospel. It is not certain articles of religion, true as these may be. It is Christ in His work for us men and for our salvation. Being what He is in His Person, He must be a King, not of the Jews only, as the title over the Cross proclaimed, but the King of men, the King absolutely, as He confessed to Pilate. Being God in our nature He must necessarily claim and secure the allegiance of all who are brought to see Him in His true character. He must be accepted as King. He must open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

As soon as He begins His active ministry, as appears in the narrative of St. Matthew (iv, 17, *et seq.*), He begins to work miracles. He heals all manner of diseases among the people. He holds and exercises a royal power over man and nature. His miracles were signs of the Kingdom. They were one of His modes of teaching concern-

ing it. They were evidences of the presence of the King. They showed that even the devils were subject unto Him. They proved His supremacy over the material and over the spiritual world. He always acted as He always spake, "with authority." He was in fact a King, and so His acts as well as His words were kingly. That He should be hailed as a King was inevitable. Nor did He repudiate the homage rendered Him. He sought it and received it, and claimed it as His due.

Necessarily, the King must have a Kingdom. He must prepare and organize it. Accordingly we find Him legislating for it and giving full instructions concerning it. The Parables of the Kingdom, which show what it should be like and set forth its leading characteristics by analogies, are most suggestive examples of this teaching. They show that it was to be organic and visible; that it was to grow in the world from small beginnings, and to become universal; that it would embrace bad subjects with the good, and that the good should at last be separated and rewarded. He instituted the rite of naturalization into the Kingdom, as well as that which expresses continued devotion and fealty. He declared that except any one be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (St. John iii, 3-5). He ordained laws for His Kingdom, as in the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses. To confess Him as King, to keep His Commandments, to take up His Cross and follow

Him obediently: such were conditions of discipleship of Him in His Kingdom. For the King Himself is the only absolutely authoritative teacher. He who would learn of Him must come under His easy yoke, and so find peace and rest. He provided the proper spiritual sustenance for His people. They were to be nurtured by His Word and Sacraments. They were to feed upon Him, and thus become one with Him. They were to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood and so have eternal life, and be raised up again at the last day.

He identified His Kingdom with His Church. He said, referring to St. Peter's confession of His Divinity: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (St. Matt. xvi, 17, 18). And subsequently He gave the same powers of discipline in His Church or Kingdom to all of His Apostles (xviii, 18, 19). The Church to be builded and the Kingdom to be established are here unmistakably one. By the sacrifice of His life on Calvary He "purchased the Church with His own blood" (Acts xx, 28). Thus He obtained for His subjects complete redemption from the curse and slavery of sin. By His own power He enables them to vanquish all enemies and to overcome the world. He said to His Apostles,

whom He called to succeed to the functions He chose to transmit, and to be His agents and representatives in teaching and discipline: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (St. John xx, 21-23). "Go ye, disciple all nations, baptizing them," etc., "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world" (St. Matthew xxviii, 19, 20). And in the interval between His resurrection and ascension, that they might be guided rightly and shielded from mistake in their arduous work of planting the Church and organizing its various instrumentalities, so that it might be everywhere "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic," He was repeatedly "speaking unto them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Acts i, 3).

The Apostles understood the Kingdom and the Church to be identical. At Ephesus, in the synagogue, St. Paul, "for the space of three months was disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God" (Acts xix, 8). And at Rome, under bonds, on the day appointed, "there came many into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts xxviii, 23). Of course the Kingdom has a wider meaning. It begins here. It extends into Paradise. It is perfected in the heavenly state after the Resurrection. So, too, the

Church is to be perfected, purged and made without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. v, 27). "The general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven," "the heavenly Jerusalem," is here on earth, and is also eternal in the glory and joy of Christ (Heb. xii, 23).\*

That the view here taken is no novelty, though so often now denied or ignored, appears from the definition of the Westminster Confession: "The visible Church—which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel, not confined to one nation as before under the law—consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, *and is the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the house and family of God." And the Rev. Dr. Van Dyke, in his recent Princeton lectures on "The Church: Her Ministry and Sacraments," sums up well the Scripture doctrine as follows: "The Kingdom which Daniel prophesied should be set up in the days of the Son of man (ii, 44), whose approach was announced by John the Baptist (Matt. iii, 2), which Christ Himself declared to be near at hand (Matt. iv, 17), and which He commanded His disciples to go forth and proclaim (Matt. x, 7), the Kingdom which He promised that the men of that generation should see before they

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\* Gore's "Ministry of the Christian Church," p. 43. Buy this work, and also "Lux Mundi," which in several of its essays beautifully brings out and illustrates "the religion of the Incarnation."

tasted death (Matt. xvi, 28), and which they did see in its power on the Day of Pentecost; the Kingdom of God which St. Paul preached by the space of three years at Ephesus (Acts xx, 25-31), the Kingdom whose keys were given to Peter and the other Apostles as the representatives of all Church officers, and for whose increase all Christians are to pray and labor—*CAN be none other than the visible Church of Christ*”\* (p. 31).

My brethren, so certain as Christianity is true, that Kingdom is in the world to-day. Christ is King now as really as when He taught in the flesh, and as when He came in the power of His Spirit in the Apostolic Church. The Lord “adds to the Church” now as then of such as are being saved (Acts ii, 47), and they now “continue in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of the bread and the prayers” (Acts ii, 42). In the way appointed “we show forth His death until He come” (1 Cor. xi, 26). Our Lord and King cannot change. The constitution of His Kingdom cannot be altered in

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\* Bruce, Rev. A. B., in his very suggestive work “The Kingdom of God,” fails to see the identity of the Kingdom and the Church. He says, pp. 262, 263, that the Church is “practically identical with the Kingdom of God he had hitherto preached,” and that “in this Church the righteousness of the Kingdom should find its home.” But by “practically identical” he means, as the context shows, not at all identical. This defective view also appears in Dr. Candlish’s book on the same subject, and many other recent works. Dr. Richey, in his work on the Parables of St. Matthew’s Gospel, brings out the true Scriptural idea.

On the Church, in its higher and super local and heavenly view, see Eph. v, 25; Col. i, 24; Heb. xii, 22, 23; Rev. vii, 9-12; and compare St. Matt. xvi, 18, from which the Bishop of Carlisle draws the inference: “To have no faith in the Church is to have no faith in Jesus Christ.”—“Foundations of the Creed.”

anything essential. The terms of admission, the means of growth, the rules of living, the things in which to show obedience and loyal service, are forever unchanging. The Gospel of the Son of God is now and forever "the Gospel of the Kingdom." So must Christ's ministers preach it, or be false to their trust. So must we all receive it, or be disloyal and recreant to solemn duty.

You, brethren, are members of this Kingdom, if you are Christians. You have sworn and you give your allegiance to the King. You are subjects of Christ, and your privileges are assured in virtue of your heavenly citizenship.

This view of Christianity, which is so prominent in our Lord's own teaching and that of His Apostles, is much needed in the present day. For many claim the name without the stamp and seal of Christ, and the character of Christians. Many profess the Gospel who decline to put themselves under the King in the Kingdom of Grace. Many say they believe the religion of Christ and hope for immunity from the consequences of disobedience to Him, though they are not enrolled in the Christian state and do not perform the distinctive duties of its citizens. Real Christianity does not admit that sort of profession. Are you the loyal subjects of Christ your King? That is the question. Have you really entered into His Kingdom by being born again from above? Do you keep His Commandments, and thus show that you love Him? Are you

under the vows of allegiance, and do you keep them? Are you habitually in the way of securing the grace and strength to keep them through all the means and ways appointed?

It is a very easy way to be a Christian to make no open confession of Christ, to take up no cross of self-sacrifice, to have no vows, to give no proof of fealty. It is very easy to trust to an inward persuasion of the mind, or a peculiar state of feeling, while the life is out of connection with Christ, and the conduct is not unlike that of those to whom in the last day He will say "I know you not; depart from Me." In a time of persecution, it would be a very convenient sort of Christianity, to claim in secret a religion of the heart or mind, and not to come openly and boldly into the ranks of Christ's followers, with the tokens of His fellowship and the badges of His service upon you. But what is this but the religion of a Demas who loved this present world. What is it but to deny Christ before men, for fear of the results of confessing Him. What is it but like a thief and a robber to attempt to climb up some other way into the inclosure of the Kingdom and flock of Christ, and to claim the blessing and the rewards He promises without the conditions of real faith and love, as shown by the fruits of devotion and active service?

Do not deceive yourselves. To be a Christian is to be in Christ sacramentally, visibly, vitally and inwardly, and



an open recognized subject of His Kingdom. So are you recipients of His grace and love therein. It is to meet His calls upon you unselfishly for loyal and obedient labors and sacrifices for His cause. It is to use, in humble faith and dependence, the means through which He promises strength and grace. It is to be clothed in His armour and to fight under His command against sin, the world and the devil. None can be Christians whose relations to Christ are equivocal. It is not enough even to be naturalized. You cannot rely on your admission by baptism into the Kingdom in infancy or in adult years, and the nominal rights of citizenship, if you are not *confirmed* in His grace and living in communion and vital union with Him by His Spirit, and standing in the attitude of open allegiance and unmistakable fidelity. He is to you what He came to be only when before the whole world you acknowledge Him by word and deed, to be your King and your Lord and Saviour.



XI.

JESUS CHRIST THE ENLIGHTENER SEPARATING  
MEN AND REVEALING CHARACTER.

ST. JOHN ix, 39:

*And Jesus said: For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind.*

## XI.

### JESUS CHRIST THE ENLIGHTENER SEPARATING MEN AND REVEALING CHARACTER.

ONE of the saddest spectacles is that of a person deprived of the sense of sight.\* Jesus, as He escaped from those who took up stones to stone Him because He asserted His Divinity, was called to look upon such a spectacle. As He passed by He saw a man who was born blind ; a man who could not see the light of heaven and the glorious objects it reveals ; a man who, from his childhood, had been obliged to grope in darkness, and to feel his way from place to place ; who could not know the countenance of a friend ; who was denied most of life's enjoyments. Sad, indeed, to behold ; infinitely sadder to one conscious of such a deprivation ! Our Lord always sympathized completely with every class of sufferers. He was ever ready to supply every real want, to bestow every needed gift. More than once He gave sight to the blind, and with the light of heaven poured the light of heavenly truth into the darkened soul. Thus He showed Himself the enlightener of souls.

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\* This sermon was preached in the American Church in Paris and in St. Paul's, London.

Answering the metaphysical difficulty of His disciples touching the cause of the man's blindness, that it was not for his own sin nor that of his parents—a statement not inconsistent with the doctrine that all suffering is in consequence of the sin there is in the world—and giving as a final cause of his blindness, that it might be the occasion for the manifestation of the work of God in his cure, our Lord proceeded at once to use the instrumentalities He would make effectual, not restoring his sight by a word—which He might have done, and which was one of His ways of healing—but to make the cure more effectual by calling the man's faith into exercise, bestowing His gifts through sacramental agencies,\* directing his mind out of and away from himself, and leading him to think of his physician and of the certain prospect of his recovery. Hence our Lord “spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay :” for He did not fear, as an impostor would have

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\* The extent to which our Lord made use of what we may call the Sacramental principle in healing is remarkable. Sometimes it is in the use of some instrumental media, as in the two cases of healing the blind; sometimes it is by a word; usually it is by requiring some act that shall test and bring out the Faith. It is often remarked how those Christian people who reject and undervalue the Sacraments of the Gospel, have invented Sacraments of their own, such as “rising for prayers,” “the anxious bench,” etc. The experienced parish priest knows what comfort and strength come to the sick man when receiving the Holy Communion properly prepared. Just as the Sacraments sum up and teach all the doctrines of Christianity and conserve and hand them on and proclaim them most effectively, so in the application of Christianity to souls they are found to be indispensable.

done, to be classed with mere human physicians. Then He commanded him to go, wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. The blind man had the faith to obey immediately, for he was not like Naaman, the Syrian, expecting some great thing to be done (2 Kings v, 11, 12). He did not suspend his obedience till reasons should be given. He believed. He obeyed. So all who believe in Christ obey Him. The blind man "went his way, and washed, and came seeing."

The controversy with the man whose eyes were thus opened, on the part of his Pharisaical neighbors, in regard to the character of the Great Healer, who had done this work on the Sabbath day, simply manifested in them a spirit of bitter hostility to the true Light, revealed their blindness of heart, and made it evident that they would not and therefore could not see. It was as a summary of this whole colloquy and its *animus* shown towards the Healer and Life-giver, and a comment called for, by the twofold effect of the miracle upon the blind man on the one hand, and on his fault-finding neighbors, the leading Pharisees, on the other, that our Lord uttered the words of the text: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and they who see might be made blind." It is a general principle, applicable in all cases, where the Light of the Truth comes into contact with the human heart.

Our Lord Jesus Christ says of Himself: "As long as

I am in the world I am the Light of the world." This is as true now as when He was bodily present to men. He is in the world now as truly and more effectually than He could be then. His presence was local, now it is universal. It was to the senses. Now it is to men's minds. It is now a spiritual presence. The agency of its manifestation is the Holy Spirit, Who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to those to whom the truth comes through the ministry of the Word, or through any of the channels of communication which belong by divine appointment to the Kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ is in His Church as the Light and Light-giver to the world. Before Christ came, the world was in darkness. Where He is not known the world is in darkness. Everything of knowledge which can be properly called Light is found in the world where the Church of God exists, and nowhere else.\* Go to Mohammedan countries, go to those lands where Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, are the prevailing religions and Christ's Church is unknown, and you will find little but darkness intellectually as well as morally. If the human mind could attain unto the Light of Truth, why has it not been

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\*The *fact* must be admitted. Some may deny that Christianity is the source of the light directly or indirectly. But see Dr. Storrs' "The Divine Origin of Christianity," C. Loring Bruce's "Gesta Christi," Dean Church's "Some Influences of Christianity on National Character," Ozanam's "History of Civilization in the Fifth Century," Guizot's "History of Civilization" and of "Civilization in France," Lecky's "History of European Morals," etc.



attained by the devotees of those religions? If the Light is in man naturally, why has it not appeared among them? Why have they had no appreciable influence in the history of human progress? Why are they but semi-civilized? Why are they morally confessedly corrupt and degraded, even as compared with the lowest types of Christians? They are not wanting in intellect. Some of the most important scientific discoveries were made by them ages before they were known in Europe. They are of quick understanding, of subtle intelligence. They are not without a high mental culture among their learned classes. Still they are confessedly in darkness. Why is it? It is because He Who is the Light of the world has not risen upon them as the Sun of righteousness. Their light is not the true light. It is a false and artificial light which leaves them unilluminated. Every comparison you can make between nations where Christ is known in His Church and where He is not known; every fair enquiry into the causes of the obvious difference in respect to true enlightenment, will lead to the certain conclusion that Christ alone is the Light and Enlightener of mankind.

He came into the world to remain in it till it should be enlightened. He did not leave it when He was crucified, dead and buried, for He rose again. He did not leave it when He ascended, for He came again in great glory when, on the day of Pentecost, according to His promise, His Spirit descended upon the heads and filled

the hearts of His Apostles, and through them His Church. Nor was this an isolated and temporary phenomenon. It was the beginning of a long history. His spiritual coming was to bring in a permanent presence of Christ in His Church. It was to enthrone the once dead but living Christ in the hearts of men. It was to make Him the means of their reconciliation with God, and their supreme Teacher and King. It was to enable Him to be the Light and Life of men to an extent and in a measure before unknown and impossible.

The relation of Jesus Christ to the intellectual, moral and spiritual world is like that of the sun to the physical world. To the earth and the solar system the sun is the great enlightener. There is no light of day which does not come from the sun. The artificial light which we kindle for illumination in the night was from the sun, stored up beforehand for our use, in the vegetable products of wood, and coal, and oil.\* So all spiritual light is from the sun of righteousness. If men get it in any measure through indirect processes, it is from Him originally, for He is the true Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world (St. John i, 9). The great heathen teachers were thus enlightened. There are many now who derive from Christianity the light by which they are enabled to deny its source. Christianity has given the

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\* This was written before the application of electricity to purposes of giving light, and as a force in locomotion.

general enlightenment and spiritual knowledge, of which the men are the offspring who strive to banish from the world and deprive mankind of the true light which keeps the world from moral stagnation and putrefaction.

Think of the effects of the light of the sun! Not only does it enable us to see. Not only is it the necessary means by which we are enabled to pursue all the avocations of life, which, without light, would be impossible. Not only does it reveal to us all the objects of beauty which we behold in the heavens above and in the earth around us. It is the source of all motion, of all force\*, vital as well as mechanical, of all physical life. When we say that the sun is the light of the world, we mean more than most persons apprehend. It is generally known that all the colors that delight the eye are in the light which comes from the sun, for all have witnessed the decomposition of this light into the primary colors in the rainbow or by passing it through a prism. But it is not so generally known what important and necessary functions belong to the light, in all vegetable and animal growth, and in all physical changes. If the sun were darkened in the heavens, all the processes of nature would cease. Stagnation and death would be universal.

It is in analogy with the light of the sun that Christ is called the Light of the world in the highest spiritual sense.

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\* Refer to last note.

And the analogy is complete. We cannot live, and move, and perform the functions of spiritual beings without the life-giving power which is from Him. It is His light that gives life spiritually, as truly as the light of the sun gives life physically. His light is the only spiritual force, or is the equivalent of all spiritual force among men, and angels, and all intelligent moral beings, as truly as the light of the sun is force and the equivalent of all kinds of force in the material world. Take Christ out of the world and the light that emanates from Him as constantly and as necessarily as the light flows from the sun, and the result would be the utter absence of all spiritual thought, emotion, aspiration or hope. Man would lose his high and glorious prerogatives as a spiritual being. He would be but an intelligent animal. His vision would be bounded by the horizon of the material world. There would be no heaven for him, no world of the unseen, the spiritual, the eternal.\* St. John's view of the incarnate Word warrants these statements, as does that of several of the great Christian Fathers.†

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\* See references under a previous note, also Pressensè's "The Religions before Christ," Hardwick's "Christ and Other Masters," Trench's Hulsean Lectures, etc.

† Justin Martyr's "First Apology," Chap. XLVI:

"We have been taught that Christ is the first born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought Atheists: as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them," etc., etc.

Also II, C. 10:

"For whatever either law-givers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated

Christ came into the world and is in the world as the Light, the Source and Bestower of Light, for purposes of judgment. "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see and they which see might be made blind," because this is the natural result. The light discriminates between objects. It distinguishes between what is lovely, and what is deformed and loathsome. Throw the light in its full brightness into the dark corners of the world, and the foul objects concealed there are discovered. They are seen to be what they are. They stand exposed in their native ugliness, or they are driven away to seek concealment in some remoter darkness where the light has not penetrated. When the sun rises in splendor upon the darkened world, how soon the damps and mists of night are scattered. How soon the creatures of God, in all their kinds, with joyful alacrity, and with the hum of industrious activities which is music, go forth to their work and their labor until the evening. How the life currents throb with new impulses, instead of the torpor the night had given. Life is everywhere, and ceaseless activity. Everything living is drinking in and storing the forces by which to grow and to perform its functions,

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by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. But since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves," etc.

"Tertullian was not mistaken when he wrote the '*Testimonium animae Naturaliter Christianae*.'"—Pressensè's "The Religions before Christ."

In others of the Fathers like expressions may be found, but these will suffice.

while of all dead things, decay, disorganization, corruption is hastened.

See in all this an analogy of what Christ does wherever He comes among men with His holy and heavenly light. His Church holds Him forth and makes Him known as the Light and Life of men. Discrimination is made at once between those who receive and those who reject Him. They who reject Him are revealed in their true character. They cannot darken the light. They cannot conceal it. It shines in spite of them. It shows what they are. They are afraid of it. They shrink from exposure. They flee from it, to hide themselves again in the darkness. But they who receive Him are enlightened. They are warmed into life and action. They are attracted to Him, assimilated by Him. Their spiritual functions, before dormant, now begin to work. A power is given which sets their faculties in motion. They are vitalized, invigorated, energized. They live a new life. They are new creatures.

Thus there is made a separation between the two classes which are found everywhere: those who receive the light and who are made to see, and they who think they see but do not, and whose voluntary blindness is manifested.

So it is looking upon men in the general or in masses. It is the same in the case of individuals. When the Light of Christ shines into a man's heart, a judgment

passes upon the man. What is good in him and what is evil is shown to himself, and he must choose the one or the other. He cannot remain neutral. He must cleave to the light and open his whole mind and soul to its influences, or he will shut himself up against it and declare himself of the class of whom it is said proverbially, that "none are so blind as those who will not see." If he let the light have its proper effect, that is, if he do not get away from it or shut it from him, it will warm and vitalize his whole spiritual nature. It will show him Jesus Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Christ will be born within him. He will grow into the likeness of Christ. His spiritual light will be restored. The eyes of his understanding will be enlightened. A medium is given through which he may see things clearly of which before he had no conception.

It is commonly supposed that all that is required for vision is the eye. The light is so common that it is forgotten how necessary it is as the medium through which alone objects become visible. So it is supposed that because we have the eyes of mind, understanding, faculties to perceive truth, the reason, the conscience, that therefore we can of ourselves discover the objects with which these faculties are intended to be conversant. But nothing could be more fallacious. Reason can no more of itself discover its proper objects than the eye can behold of itself material things. Christ is as necessary, His light, His

grace is as necessary, as a medium in which to behold the truth, as the light of the sun to show us material things. Therefore it is ordained and necessary that we should be born into the Kingdom, that we should be in the Covenant relation to God. That we should thus be brought into the state of salvation, and the environment of grace, wherein grace through all the appointed means is poured all around us, so that we are enabled to see clearly, in the light of Christ and His truth, what concerns our health and salvation. Here it is that we know God and whatever things make for our eternal peace.

Most people forget how necessary some medium is through which to see, or they never thought of it. They say, "we see" when they are blind, and know not in what darkness they are groping. These are they who depend upon their own unaided understandings to guide them in the most momentous concerns; such as the truths concerning God, His relations to His creatures, the means of approaching Him, the way of acceptable service of Him, and the final awards of human character and action. They search profoundly into God's Secret Councils. They think they discover His mind and purpose concerning them. They become exceedingly wise and knowing in the mysteries of redemption and grace. They go on to invent new "plans of salvation." They construct novel religious systems. They multiply sects and schisms, each with the consciously good purpose to emphasize their



newly discovered truths. They are those who *see*. In their own apprehension all is clear to them. But really, if they could be led up to the true point of view, if they could be brought into the true relations, and stand within the sphere of the Light of Christ, they would begin to realize that they had been in the outer darkness. They were trying to see without the atmosphere and medium of the true light, and so they were deceived by illusions.

Things must be seen through some medium or other. There are those who look upon everything through their prejudices. They are ignorant, but think they are wise. They prejudge things, make up their minds before they have the facts, the evidence, the necessary conditions of correct judgment. The habit of doing this creates a vicious tendency. They acquire violent likes and dislikes, based upon no adequate grounds or reasons. They want this thing to be true, therefore they think it is true. They cannot reconcile themselves to the idea of that thing being true, and therefore it must to them be false. They judge of everything by their favorable or unfavorable prepossessions. Thus they choose the "doctrine" they shall believe, the "Church" they shall "join," the "worship" they shall "unite" in. They construct their religion, and organize it in the forms they fancy to be "Scriptural." They are right, and all who differ from them are wrong. They "see." But when Christ comes to them and pours His light upon them they are made blind. They knew

not the blindness they were in, nor the falsities that deceived them.

They who are blind by seeing things through the conceits of ignorance are scarcely a different class. Ignorance is the mother of prejudice. The very ignorant person is seldom without prejudices which are unfounded, foolish and absurd in proportion to the degree of the ignorance. It is not mere ignorance of books that is referred to. Smatterers in learning, pedants, self-sufficient pretenders to knowledge may be the most ignorant of all. Ignorance, especially in religious matters, breeds all sorts of vain conceits. Oftentimes the greater the ignorance, the greater is the pretense of enlightenment. I have seen people who could not with any correctness speak or write their own language, who were utterly incapable of estimating evidence or drawing a sound conclusion from premises, and who knew no more of history, sacred or profane, and of the usages and customs which illustrate social progress, than a Hottentot, and yet who would set their notions of the meaning of Holy Scripture, especially of its abstruser portions, above that of the most learned Divines and even the Creeds of Christendom! They are those referred to in the text. If Christ could come to them in the effulgence of His light, how manifest would be their blindness, or He would, if possible, remove it. But in the Nazareth of these people He can work but few miracles, for there is little receptivity (St. Matt. xiii, 58; St. Mark vi, 5).

Still more common is the blindness of indifference and insensibility. There are many who care nothing about the truths of the Gospel, who are indifferent to the claims of Christianity. They do not think it worth their while to consider them. Or they have examined them and found them wanting! The fact really is that they have not given attention enough to the subject, even for an intelligent rejection of Christianity. They know nothing of the real arguments on either side. Self is the object of their worship, or in other words, their God is Mammon or pleasure. Their interest or inclination determines them. They see nothing which cannot be valued by its pecuniary profit, or the end of life is selfish enjoyment. "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die," they say, with the Epicureans. Everything higher than temporary sensuous gratification, everything that is not of the earth earthy, is cast aside as unworthy of their thought. They yet pride themselves on their keenness of vision. They "see" what they want. They apprehend what they pursue. But O how blinded they are, how self-deceived and deluded! They are out of the sphere of the light of Christ. The brightness of the light that shines from His face and illuminates all around Him, would make their darkness visible.

But there is, thank God, another class who do not pretend to see; who, if they are ignorant, would be glad to be enlightened; if they are prejudiced, would rejoice to be

disabused of all such hindrances to the apprehension of the truth; if they are insensible, would not cherish and perpetuate their indifference. They long for the light so far as they are without it. They would open their whole heart to receive it. When the true light reveals Himself to them, they perceive His ineffable grace and loveliness. They are attracted. They are aroused. They come into the spiritual sphere of illumination. They see in Christ's light their deformities, their alienation, their sinfulness. They see that He is the Truth, but they had been in error; that He is the Way, but they had walked in devious ways of their own; that He is the Life, but they had been dead in trespasses and sins. Their conscience quickened, declares for Him. Their reason enlightened, accepts Him. Their affections warmed, enkindled, cleave to Him and embrace Him. Their will energized, impels them to follow and obey Him. They fall before Him in reverence and adoration. In His light they see light. They confess with the man born blind. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see." May we all be of this class. May we all receive in Him the light without which our darkness is eternal death, and which gives life and immortality. And may we also be light-givers, letting our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

XII.

JESUS CHRIST SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH TO  
HIS APOSTLES.

ACTS i, 3 :

*To whom He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*

## XII.

JESUS CHRIST SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH TO HIS APOSTLES.

THE great forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension of our Lord is a most mysterious period. Many questions arise in connection with it to which an answer is desired and is not easily found. Not to mention those relating to the nature of our Lord's resurrection Body, His various appearances, His apparent assumption of different forms, the circumstances suggesting ubiquity : His presence in closed rooms and sudden departures, and yet His possessing flesh and bones, His capability of being handled, His partaking of food, His engaging in bodily acts—all which have been the occasion of much speculation and diverse opinions ; we would gladly know what His *teachings* were, what instructions He gave, what He said concerning His Church, its polity, doctrine, rites and Sacraments, the subjects of its membership, its fundamental principles.

On all these latter questions it is doubtless possible to arrive at a good degree of certainty, by following the general current of Christian interpretation in all ages, the only sure way of learning "what saith the Scriptures." As to the principal matter of His teaching we are defi-

nitely informed. He spake during the forty days, and hence daily, or on the days when He met with His disciples, "of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Thus the great subject concerning which He taught them is clear. And the fact is very suggestive. If He spake at such times concerning His Kingdom, or Church, this must surely be one of the principal themes of the Christian teacher. It is an all-important subject, and one in regard to which no Christian should be ignorant. The Apostles were justified in making it so prominent. It is a part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Church teaching rightly presented is essentially Gospel teaching. To speak concerning the Kingdom of God, is included in preaching Christ and Him crucified. For Christ crucified and risen again is the King and Head of His Church. The Church embodies, as well as conserves and proclaims, Christianity. It is the form of the substance of the Gospel of Christ. It enshrines all its inward spiritual grace. The purpose now, however, is not to enforce such inferences, just and true as they undoubtedly are. The present enquiry is rather this: What did Christ teach during the forty days concerning the Society He was establishing? What are the things He spake pertaining to the Kingdom of God?

We have two distinct sources of information, from either or both of which the answer may be found. First, His actual recorded teaching concerning His Church



during this period ; and secondly, the course taken by His Apostles in founding the Church and supplying it with all things needed for its integrity and perpetuity. For they had but to follow His directions under the inspiration of His Spirit. And therefore, what they did by the Spirit's guidance must be presumed to have been taught them by the Lord Himself. Thus they were prevented from following, in so important a matter, their fallible judgment, or their own peculiar fancies.\*

His first teaching of which we have record is that to Mary Magdalene. "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father," etc. (St. John xx, 17). He was not now to be touched and apprehended by a bodily embrace. He was to ascend to His and our Father, that He might come and be spiritually present with us, so that we might lay hold of Him by faith and be in living Communion with Him. This would be made possible in His Church by the Spirit's coming, and by the means of grace.

Again, He appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They had trusted it had been He that should have redeemed Israel ; and now, on the third day after His crucifixion, they have forgotten His promises, and are filled with despondency that the hope of the glorious Kingdom He had proclaimed is so soon blighted. "O

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\* The best work on this whole subject is Bishop Moberly's "The Great Forty Days."

fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken," is His reply. "Ought not Christ to have suffered and entered into His glory?" "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." The coming of Christ, and His sufferings, and His entering into His glory, manifestly include His coming in His Kingdom and ruling in His Church. He declares Himself to be the theme of Moses and all the Prophets, which embraces the issues of the Incarnation and Redemption. He made Himself known to these two disciples in the breaking of bread, honoring His own institution of the Holy Eucharist (St. Luke xxiv, 13-33), and carrying their minds back to the solemn occasion when "He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me," etc. (St. Luke xxii, 19, 20).

On the evening of the same day He appeared to the Apostles, Thomas being absent, and "said to them again, 'Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you,' and when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them : 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained '" (St. John xx, 21-23). Whatever this may mean—and it means more than we are apt to imagine—it is certainly the conferring of a commission in a most distinct and

solemn manner. It is giving to certain men, previously called to an official rank in His Kingdom, an authority such as He had received of the Father, and it was placing upon them the responsibility of its exercise, in the authoritative preaching and ministration of the Gospel and the application of it to souls, and in admission to or exclusion from the Church in which remission of sins is to be obtained.\*

One week later, on the recurring Lord's day, or day of His resurrection, He convinces Thomas of the reality of His risen Body, and pronounces a peculiar blessing on those who believe on Him without seeing, and to whom faith is instead of sight.

Again, in Galilee, He three times asked the disciple who had denied Him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" and commanded him (and with him all His chief ministers in all ages) to feed His lambs and His sheep, and foretold the life and death of the first of the Apostles, and of him who leaned on His breast at the supper (St. John xxi, 15-23).

And not to speak particularly of all His appearances and teaching, our Lord appeared to the Apostles on a

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\* See Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church," Book XIX, Ch. 1 and 2, and Appendix.

Dr. Seabury, of the General Theological Seminary, has an excellent pamphlet on this subject. See also Canon Carter on "The Doctrine of Confession in the Church of England," and Dr. Pusey's preface to the Abbe Gaume's "Advice to Those Who Exercise the Ministry of Reconciliation," etc.

mountain in Galilee by previous appointment. "And He spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples or Christians of all nations (*marg.*), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii, 18-20). He also said unto them, as St. Mark informs us : "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (St. Mark xvi, 15, 16). And, finally, when He met with them for the last time, (it may have been on the same occasion,) "He said unto them : These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them : Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you : but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (St. Luke

xxiv, 44-48). St. Luke, in the first chapter of the Acts, continues the account, or gives it in duplicate and with fuller amplification: "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father which, saith He, ye have heard of ME. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, 'Wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom unto Israel?' And He said unto them: 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto ME both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'"

Such was the Lord's explicit recorded teaching during the great forty days concerning the Kingdom of God. The text implies that this was but a very small part of His instruction upon this all-important subject. Of the nature of this unwritten teaching, we have only to judge by that which is written. It could not have been contradictory to this. It must rather have confirmed and explained it. It was but a fuller development of what is given in the briefest terms, as seen in what has been quoted.

Let us, then, sum up the principles which His actual

teaching during the forty days exhibits as lying at the basis of His Institution. He confirmed and fixed the interpretation of all the prophecies concerning Himself and His Kingdom. He identified His Kingdom with His Church by commissioning its chief officers and intrusting them with the keys of discipline, by which to remit and retain sins, and by requiring Baptism as the means of entering it, and appropriate tests of fealty and allegiance. He instructed His Apostles what to teach and what to do. He gave them full power, and enjoined upon them its exercise. He taught the necessity of Baptism, it would seem, of infants as well as adults, for He commanded, "Baptize all nations;" and that it brought the recipients into a covenant relation involving allegiance to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that the baptized, believing, of course, with a working faith, should be saved. He taught the continued validity, and efficacy, and binding obligation of the other Sacrament of the new life. He enjoined faith, repentance, obedience and love, and active efforts to extend His Kingdom. He taught that it was to be a spiritual Kingdom, not of this world, its powers being received from above, its life being that of the Spirit, His constant presence being in it, to ensure its growth. He shewed that His Kingdom was to be spread by the ministry of men; that it was to begin from Jerusalem, and extend itself from thence till it should fill the whole earth. He made it clear that in the Apostolate all spirit-

ual power is vested ; that to the end of the world He would be with His Apostles in the exercise of their functions ; that in them was included all lower and subordinate ministries, to be appointed by them ; that their office, with its essential functions, was to be perpetuated till its ends were accomplished in the conversion of the whole world ; that they must, therefore, be the source of office to others, of the same and inferior orders of ministry, in all ages ; that all things whatsoever He had commanded, should be the rule and measure of their teaching and action, as well as of all His ministers. Under His specific instructions, under His written law, they were to go forth into all the world, witnessing unto Him, preaching Him, requiring repentance and faith in Him, demanding Baptism as a saving and life-giving Sacrament, a means of relationship with the Holy Trinity ; feeding His people with the Bread of Life : acting, in short, as His ambassadors and representatives, standing in His stead, doing for them in all places, in all times, what He did on earth, what He would do were He bodily present, what He ordained should be done by Himself, through His ministry, divinely empowered, instructed, guided, directed of the Holy Ghost His Spirit from the Father.

All this seems to be very clearly implied, and for the most part explicitly stated, in what He is known to have spoken, if we receive the record, of His speaking things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. And the further unre-

corded teaching could only have made it clearer. We may well suppose, as in the highest degree reasonable, that foreseeing all the varying circumstances under which they would be called upon to plant the Church, foreseeing precisely what the needs of the Church would be in the Apostolic age, and in all ages, He spake such things concerning His Kingdom as would give them adequate knowledge of the work they were to do, His Spirit recalling His words to their remembrance, so that they might never be at any time in doubt, so that they might all proceed on the same general plan and fundamental principles, and the Church be one in Faith, and Polity, Ministry, Worship and Ordinances, everywhere and in all times.

And we find that the Apostles uniformly acted as if they had had such instructions. Whatever doubts arose on various matters leading to disputation, there were never any in regard to the Church, its threefold structure of ministry, and the doctrines, the word, and the sacraments. It required much discussion, and even a general Council, to settle the relations of the Gentile converts to the Ceremonial law, the observance of which for a long time lingered on among the converts from Judaism. But never was there any controversy upon the Sacrament of Baptism and the Communion of the Body and Blood, the subjects of the Christian covenant, the requisites of entering it, the doctrines to be believed, the duties to be practiced, the Ministry and its threefold order of functions and of powers, the



Apostolate, the Presbyterate and the Diaconate. The Apostles, without the least doubt or misgiving, even before Pentecost, proceeded to fill up their number by the election of Matthias in the place of Judas. They continued in their appointed place till the promise of the Father and the Pentecostal gifts endued them with power. They enjoined upon the first three thousand converts, repentance, and Baptism for the remission of sins and the reception of the Holy Ghost, adding that the promise was to them and their children everywhere and in all future time. They added to the Church in this manner all such as were coming among the saved. They that believed were so instructed that they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of Bread, and in the prayers (Acts ii, 42). They remained in Jerusalem till Confirmation by the laying on of hands was established for conferring and sealing the promise of the Father (Acts viii, 15-17), and probably till the Mother Church was fully constituted with its Apostle-Bishop James at its head, its many Presbyters and its seven Deacons, all laboring unitedly and effectively in their respective offices. And as they went forth into all lands, they planted the churches with the same organization and polity, the same doctrine, sacraments and usages. What was taught in one church, was taught in all. The same fundamental laws governed all. "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," expressed everywhere their unity.

There were at the first twelve Apostles to the Jews, the number having a typical significance, as representative of the twelve tribes, or the whole body of the Jewish people.\* But both Jews and Gentiles were to be incorporated into the one Church. There was need, therefore, of Apostles to succeed them, and particularly of Gentile Apostles, or Apostles to the Gentiles. St. Paul, though a Jew, was called to be the first of these Apostles. Barnabas was another. Timothy and Titus, and Silas, Epaphroditus, and others of the followers and companions of St. Paul, were called, as occasion required, to the same Apostolic office and functions. And under each, in due time, in their large missionary jurisdictions or more limited fields of labor, were the two orders of the Presbyter-Bishops, Elders or Priests, and the Deacons. The promise to the Apostolic body, "Lo, I am with you alway," required their perpetuation till the end of the Christian dispensation. They were necessarily to have successors. This was not only natural, but inevitable. They were to be the ordainers, the source under Christ of all ministerial authority, as well as the chief teachers, supervisors and executive officers of the Kingdom of Christ.

And so we find the Apostles alone ordaining, alone spoken of as having and exercising the power of conferring

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\* On the Twelve Apostles, the Apostles to the Gentiles, and the extension of the Apostolate, see Mahan's "Church History," Book I, Ch. XI. Also Dr. Mines' "Presbyterian Clergyman Looking for the Church," Wilson's "Church Identified," etc.

ministerial office. Others might elect, but they must appoint (Acts vi, 6). And we have no record of any but those who had from them their commission, lawfully exercising the functions of ministers. False Apostles indeed arose. Self-constituted ministers taught their heresies and sought to divide the flock of Christ. But they only gained a bad eminence. They were treated as they deserved. The true and faithful followed not after them, but shunned their teaching and their ministry. Nowhere was Church order and government left to be determined by circumstances or by individual caprice. If there were at Jerusalem the Apostle-Bishop, and Presbyters, and Deacons, so were there also at Ephesus, Crete, and Philippi, and in the seven churches of Asia Minor, and elsewhere, when the growth of Christianity had been such in these places as to require the churches to be fully constituted. And the rule was even then adhered to, that no man might build on another's foundation, nor take another's place in labor, unless by courtesy or as a substitute. The Church was established as the Kingdom of God. Everywhere there was the same gradation and subordination of officers. Everywhere the fit men were appointed by the proper Apostolic authority and placed at their posts. Everywhere the Kingdom had its subjects, constitution and laws, and officers of teaching and administration.

We might illustrate in various ways the regularity and

uniformity with which the work of planting and organizing the Church everywhere proceeded. Take, for example, the rite of Confirmation. The first time we read of it is in Samaria. Two Apostles are sent thither, to lay their hands on the baptized, to impart unto them further gifts of the Holy Ghost. More than twenty years afterwards, in distant Ephesus, we find St. Paul himself baptizing and confirming in the same manner. And, still again, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares the doctrine of laying on of hands, as well as Baptism, to be among the first "principles of the doctrine of Christ" (Heb. vi, 1, 2). With such facts before us, we cannot doubt that this beautiful sacramental rite prevailed in all the churches, and was enjoined and practiced by all the Apostles, as the means of bestowing upon the converts who were baptized the full reception of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed at Pentecost as the characteristic mark of the Christian dispensation. So it has been done ever since by their successors.

Take the question of infant baptism, and you have apparently the same uniformity and universality of practice. At Philippi, the family of Lydia and the family of the jailer were baptized and made members of the Church (Acts xvi, 15, 33). In Corinth, St. Paul baptized the household of Stephanus (1 Cor. i, 16). In Asia, little children are Church members. And, in general, persons of all classes and ages are addressed as Christians in the

Apostolic Epistles. It is taken for granted that infants and children, such as the Lord had taken into His arms and blessed, are the proper subjects of the Kingdom of God. The notion that they are not is certainly a modern one.

However it came to pass, we find the second century opening with Christianity organized in the Church, which, so far as can be known, is one and the same in structure, teaching, and sacramental and ritual use, in all the parts of its vastly extended empire.\* Infants were baptized as well as adults, whether by immersion or effusion is of little consequence. The Holy Communion was celebrated in one way, and had one meaning. One system of doctrine was everywhere inculcated. Confirmation was practiced everywhere as a sacred ordinance. The Creed was one,

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\* On the Church at the beginning of the 2d century, see Bishop Lightfoot's Essay on "The Christian Ministry" in his "Philippians," Gore on "The Ministry of the Christian Church," the Author's "The Church and its Apostolic Ministry," Lecture VI. Also his article on the threefold Ministry in "The Treasury" of New York for November, 1890.

Dr. Salmon says in "The Expositor," that Church History passes through a tunnel, so to speak, from the time of the Apostles to that of the Apostolic Fathers. The Church may be likened to a train of cars with its freight, etc. It enters the tunnel on schedule time. It comes out in the second century on schedule time. The question is, was it taken to pieces and reconstructed while in the tunnel? This could not be. The air-holes, through which you can see it in its progress, show it all the while the same. It brings out the freightage it had, the Ministry, the Word, the Scriptures, the Faith, the Sacraments. The Ministry could not possibly have been reconstructed from Congregational or Presbyterian to Episcopal, during the brief interval covered by the memory of men living in the time of Ignatius, and of men in the time of Irenæus, whose fathers knew St. John and his contemporaries, and whose grandfathers might have seen the Lord.

and it was in substance the Creed we have to-day. The Apostles, or chief Ministers, coming now to be called Bishops, alone ordained, and had supervision of the churches. The Ministry of Apostolic succession, in its three Orders, was everywhere at work. On none of these subjects had there been or did there afterwards arise any dispute or controversy. All was definitely settled, as if from the first. Later than from the first it were difficult to conceive of such general acquiescence.

Now, what was the reason of this uniformity of belief and practice? Why had there not arisen anomalous churches of various types and polity, teaching and usages, determined by the wish and purpose of strong leaders, or by accidental circumstance? Why had there been such entire freedom from controversy on all these matters which we regard as fundamental, and which only in comparatively recent times have been brought into dispute? There is but one answer to these questions. It was because the Apostles proceeded in their work according to a plan, in which they all agreed, as all men must who expect to accomplish great results. Considering who and what they were, this plan must have been divinely given them. The Lord had taught them, and the inspiration of His Spirit directed them. So confidently did they act in all things, so without all doubt or hesitancy did they proceed, that we are sure they could not have been left to themselves. They evidently felt that they had divine authority to guide

them. In applying the instructions they had received, the Holy Ghost was their ever-present guide and helper. Hence their efforts were not tentative. They were not left to stumble along, trying one plan and then another, till they should hit upon something practicable, failing in some places, succeeding in others. If Christ had spoken to them fully of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and the Holy Spirit recalled this teaching to their remembrance and made it understood, their course and its uniform results are explained. If not, so far as we can see it is inexplicable.

We may safely, therefore, assume and hold that the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God,\* of which the Lord spake, were such clear directions as they needed in carrying out their great commission, in laying the foundations of the Church, in fixing the Church's polity, teaching, rites and usages in all their essential principles. Of

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\* On the Kingdom of God and its identification with the Church, Dr. Richey, in his "Parables of St. Matthew's Gospel," is most satisfactory. He simply explains the parables on the basis of this identification. Of course, there is a difference. Dr. Edersheim, in his "Life and Times of the Messiah," seeing the difference, seems to almost deny the identity in his comments on St. John iii, 3-5. The difference is only in the different ways of looking at it. In the "Church" more account is taken of the human elements divinely organized. In the "Kingdom" the rule and sovereignty of Christ is more prominent. Hooker's claim that St. John iii, 3-5, can only refer to Christian Baptism, has never been and cannot be successfully disputed. Hooker, Book V, LIX:

"I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words as alchemy doth or would do the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth and bringing in the end all truth to nothing," etc. etc.

course, everything seemed to grow up naturally under their planting ; but he who believes in a Providence that rules in History and determines human institutions, can find no difficulty in believing also that the Church, in both its outward form and its inward character, life and teaching, is essentially and really Divine. The old Tabernacle, type of the Church, had been built according to the pattern shown in the Mount. All things that are organic live and grow according to their predestined type. The plan of God predetermines all evolution or development. The Church was builded as was the Tabernacle and all God's creatures and institutions. The Lord's own teaching during the forty days, with the Holy Spirit given afterwards to explain it and to ensure its right application, accounts for the Church as it was founded and has, in the true identity of its Apostolic norm and pattern, ever continued in the world.

But what is the end of such a discourse as this ? What follows of practical moment ? This, brethren, follows. We have not followed cunningly-devised fables in believing the Gospel as the Church hath received the same. In respect to all that is fundamental, we know that we stand on a rock, the rock of the true Faith. We are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head Corner Stone. Our Christianity is not of human devising, not even the devising of Apostolic men. It is a divine system which we hold. It is Christ's



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own Institution we are members of. It is His Kingdom of which we are subjects. The Lord, our King, is the Captain of our Salvation. We are under His law. We are not a law unto ourselves. Nothing in Christianity is left to our invention. Not for us is the folly of attempting improvements. We have only to make our lives accordant to our principles. Our duty is one of simple loyalty to Christ. Faithful to Him, all is secure. Our hope is one that cannot disappoint us. We have an Anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast. The blessedness in store is our sure inheritance. It is sealed to us in Christ, and is eternal.

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If Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit gave Christianity to the world as an Institution, with its body of teaching, its Sacraments, etc., everybody can see what guarantees He was giving herein of its truth, what grounds He was laying for the confirmation of the faith of His disciples in all ages. Being an Institution, Kingdom or Church, it must have from the first a history. Its date could be fixed. It could not have begun at any other time than is alleged. It could not have been set up later, nor on other grounds than the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, God-man, nor in any other manner than the history records. Try to conceive it starting up somewhere else than in Jerusalem or at some later date than the first Pentecost, remembering that all disciples of Christ were required to be baptized into it and to receive habitually and often the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, and of course must know whether they were baptized and were in the habit of receiving the Holy Eucharist or not, and you will see into what difficulties you are involved on that hypothesis. Its Sacraments alone make it impossible that it should have had a later or any other origin. No impostor could have made people believe they had received the Sacraments all along when they had not, as they would have had to do, if they were setting up Christianity at any later date and were trying to make the people whom they were bringing into it, believe that it had been in existence all along from the day of Pentecost! But if it began when and where it did, as recorded, and under the circumstances alleged in the Acts of the Apostles,

which is the only alternative supposition, *then it is TRUE*. It is founded on **FACTS**. The Creed of Christendom held from the beginning is incontrovertible. See Maclear's "Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist," and Leslie's "Short Method with the Deists," which is, in its right application, as unanswerable an argument as ever.









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